

THE
WORKS
OF
Alexander Pope, Esq;

VOL. VI.

A



THE
WORKS

OF

Alexander Pope, Esq;

VOLUME the SIXTH.

BEING THE

FIRST of his LETTERS.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON.

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P R E F A C E

OF THE

Publisher of the Surreptitious Edition, 1735.

WE presume we want no apology to the reader for this publication, but some may be thought needful to Mr Pope: however, he cannot think our offence so great as theirs, who first separately published what we have here but collected in a better form and order. As for the Letters we have procured to be added, they serve but to compleat, explain, and sometimes set in a true light, those others, which it was not in the writer's, or our power to recall.

This collection hath been owing to several cabinets: some drawn from thence by accidents, and others (even of those to ladies) voluntarily given. It is to one of that sex we are beholden for the whole correspondence with H. C. Esq; which letters being lent her by that gentleman, she took the liberty to print; as appears by the following, which we shall give at length, both as it is something curious, and as it may serve for an apology for ourselves.

14 P R E F A C E T O T H E

TO HENRY CROMWELL, Esq;

June 27, 1727.

AFTER so long a silence as the many and great oppressions I have sigh'd under have occasioned; one is at a loss how to begin a letter to so kind a friend as yourself: but as it was always my resolution, if I must sink, to do it as decently (that is, as silently) as I could; so when I found myself plunged into unforeseen and unavoidable ruin, I retreated from the world, and in a manner buried myself in a dismal place, where I knew none, and none knew me. In this dull unthinking way, I have protracted a lingering death (for life it cannot be called) ever since you saw me, sequestered from company, deprived of my books, and nothing left to converse with, but the letters of my dead or absent friends; among which latter I always placed yours and Mr Pope's in the first rank. I lent some of them indeed to an ingenious person, who was so delighted with the specimen, that he importuned me for a sight of the rest, which having obtained, he convey'd them to the press, I must not say altogether with my consent, nor wholly without it. I thought them too good to be lost in oblivion, and had no cause to apprehend the disobliging of any. The public, *viz.* all persons of taste and judgment, would be pleas'd with so agreeable an amusement; Mr Cromwell could not be angry, since it was but justice to his merit, to publish the solemn and private professions of love, gratitude, and veneration, made him by so celebrated an author; and sincerely Mr Pope ought not to resent the publication, since the early pregnancy of his genius was no dishonour to his character.

And yet had either of you been asked, common modesty would have obliged you to refuse, what you would not be displeased with, if done without your knowledge. And besides, to end all dispute, you had been pleased to make me a free gift of them, to do what I pleased with them; and every one knows, that the person to whom a letter is addressed, has the same right to dispose of it, as he has of goods purchased with his money. I doubt not but your generosity and honour will do me the right, of owning by a line that I came honestly by them. I flatter myself, in a few months I shall again be visible to the world; and whenever through good providence that turn shall happen, I shall joyfully acquaint you with it, there being none more truly your obliged servant, than, Sir,

Your faithful, and
most humble servant,

E. THOMAS.

P. S. A letter, Sir, directed to Mrs Thomas, to be left at my house, will be safely transmitted to her, by,

Yours, &c.

E. CURLL.

To Mr POPE.

Epsom, July 6, 1727.

WHEN these letters were first printed, I wondered how Curll could come by them, and could not but laugh at the pompous title, since whatever you wrote to me was humour, and familiar raillery. As soon as I came from Epsom, I heard you had been to see me, and I writ you a short letter from Wills', that I longed to see you. Mr D——s, about that time, charged me with giving

them to a mistress, which I positively denied, not in the least, at that time, thinking of it, but some time after, finding in the newspapers letters from Lady Packington, Lady Chudleigh, and Mr Norris, to the same Sappho or E. T. I began to fear that I was guilty. I have never seen these letters of Curll's, nor would go to his shop about them; I have not seen this Sappho, alias E. T. these seven years.— Her writing, *That I gave her 'em, to do what she would with 'em*, is straining the point too far. I thought not of it, nor do I think she did then; but severe necessity, which catches hold of a twig, has produced all this; which has lain hid, and forgot, by me so many years. Curll sent me a letter last week, desiring a positive answer about this matter, but finding I would give him none, he went to E. T. and writ a postscript in her long romantic letter, to direct my answer to his house; but they not expecting an answer, sent a young man to me, whose name, it seems, is Pattison: I told him I should not write any thing, but I believed it might be so as she writ in her letter. I am extremely concerned that my former indiscretion in putting them into the hands of this *Preieuse*, should have given you so much disturbance; for the last thing I should do would be to disoblige you, for whom I have ever preserved the greatest esteem, and shall ever be, Sir,

Your faithful friend, and
most humble servant,

HENRY CROMWELL.

To Mr POPE.

August 1, 1727.

THOUGH I writ my long narrative from Epsom till I was tired, yet was I not satisfied, lest any doubt should rest upon your mind. I could not make protestations of my innocence of a grievous crime; but I was impatient till I came to town, that I might send you those letters as a clear evidence that I was a perfect stranger to all their proceeding. Should I have protested against it, after the printing, it might have been taken for an attempt to decry his purchase; and as the little exception you have taken has served him to play his game upon us for these two years, a new incident from me might enable him to play it on for two more.—The great value she expresses for all you write, and her passion for having them, I believe, was what prevailed upon me to let her keep them. By the interval of twelve years at least, from her possession to the time of printing them, 'tis manifest, that I had not the least ground to apprehend such a design; but as people in great straits bring forth their hoards of old gold and most valued jewels; so Sappho had recourse to her hid treasure of letters, and played off not only your's to me, but all those to herself (as the lady's last stake) into the press.—As for me, I hope, when you shall coolly consider the many thousand instances of our being deluded by the females, since that great original of Adam by Eve, you will have a more favourable thought of the undesigning error of

Your faithful friend,

and humble servant,

HENRY CROMWELL.

B. 3

Now, should our apology for this publication be as ill received as the lady's seems to have been by the gentlemen concerned; we shall at least have *her comfort*, of being thanked by the rest of the world. Nor has Mr P. himself any great cause to think it much offence to his modesty, or reflection on his judgment; when we take care to inform the public, that there are few letters of his in this collection, which were not written under twenty years of age: on the other hand, we doubt not the reader will be much more surprized to find, at that early period, so much variety of style, affecting sentiment, and justness of criticism, in pieces which must have been writ in haste, very few perhaps ever reviewed, and none intended for the eye of the public.



A
C A T A L O G U E
O F T H E

Surreptitious and incorrect Editions of
Mr POPE'S LETTERS.

- I. FAMILIAR LETTERS to Henry Cromwell, Esq; by Mr Pope, 12mo. Printed for Edmund Curll, 1727.

[In this are *Verses*, &c. ascribed to Mr P, which were *not his*.]

- II. Mr Pope's Literary Correspondence for thirty years, from 1704 to 1734; being a collection of letters which passed between him and several eminent persons. Printed for E. Curll, 8vo, 1735. Two editions.—The same in duodecimo, with cuts. The third edition.

[These contain several letters *not genuine*.]

- III. Mr Pope's Literary Correspondence, Vol. II. Printed for the same, 8vo, 1735. [In this volume are *no* letters of Mr Pope's, but a few of those to Mr Cromwell *reprinted*; nor any to him, but one said to be Bishop Atterbury's, and another in that Bishop's name, certainly nor his: one or two Letters from St Omer's, advertised of Mr Pope, but which proved to be only *concerning* him; some scandalous reflections of one Le Neve on the Legislature, Courts of Justice, and Church of England, pag. 116, 117. and the Divinity of Christ expressly denied, in page 123, 124. With some scandalous anecdotes, and a narrative.]

—The same in duodecimo.

- IV. Mr Pope's Literary Correspondence, Vol. III. Printed for E. Curll, 8vo, 1735. [In this is *only one*

letter by Mr Pope to the Duchess of Buckingham, which the publisher some way procured and printed against her order. It also contains four letters, entitled, Mr Pope's to Miss Blount, which are literally taken from an old translation of Voiture's to Mad. Rambouillet.]—The same in duodecimo.

V. Mr Pope's Literary Correspondence, Vol. IV. Printed by the same; contains *not one Letter* of this Author.—The same in duodecimo.

VI. Mr Pope's Literary Correspondence, Vol. V. containing *only one Letter* of Mr P. and another of the Lord B. with a scandalous preface of Curll's, how he could come at more of their Letters, 8vo. Printed for the same, 1736.

VII. Letters of Mr Pope and several Eminent Persons, Vol. I. from 1705 to 1711. Printed and sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster, 8vo, 1735.

—The same, Vol. II. from 1711. &c. Printed and sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster, 8vo, 1735.—The same in 12mo, with a Narrative.

VIII. Letters of Mr Pope and several eminent Persons, from 1705 to 1735. Printed and sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster, 12mo, 1735. [This edition is said in the title to contain *more Letters* than any other, but contains only *Two*, said to be the Bishop of Rochester's, and printed before by Curll.]

IX. Letters of Mr Pope and several Eminent Persons, from the year 1705 to 1735. Vol. I. and Vol. II. Printed for T. Cooper, at the Globe in Pater-noster Row, 1735, 12mo.

[In this was inserted the *Forged Letter* from the Bishop of Rochester, and some other things, unknown to Mr Pope.]

P R E F A C E

Prefixed to the

First Genuine Edition in Quarto, 1737.

IF what is here offered the reader, should happen in any degree to please him, the thanks are not due to the author, but partly to his friends, and partly to his enemies: it was wholly owing to the affection of the former, that so many Letters, of which he never kept copies, were preserv'd; and to the malice of the latter, that they were produced in this manner.

He had been very disagreeably used, in the publication of some Letters written in his youth, which fell into the hands of a woman who printed them, without his or his correspondent's consent, 1727. This treatment, and the apprehension of more of the same kind, put him upon recalling as many as he could from those whom he imagined had kept any. He was sorry to find the number so great, but immediately lessened it, by burning three parts in four of them: the rest he spared, not in any preference of their style or writing, but merely as they preserv'd the memory of some friendships which will ever be dear to him, or set in a true light some matters of fact, from which the scriblers of the times had taken occasion to asperse either his friends or himself. He therefore laid by the originals, together with those of his correspondents, and caused a copy to be taken to deposite in the library of a noble friend;

that in case either of the revival of slanders, or the publication of surreptitious Letters, during his life or after, a proper use might be made of them.

The next year, the posthumous works of Mr Wycherly were printed, in a way disreputable enough to his memory. It was thought a justice due to him, to shew the world his better judgment; and that it was his last resolution to have suppressed those poems. As some of the letters which had passed between him and our author cleared that point, they were published in 1729, with a few marginal notes added by a friend.

If in these letters, and in those which were printed without his consent, there appear too much of a juvenile ambition of wit, or affectation of gaiety, he may reasonably hope it will be considered to *whom*, and at *what age*, he was guilty of it, as well as how soon it was over. The rest, every judge of writings will see, were by no means efforts of the genius, but emanations of the heart: and this alone may induce any candid reader to believe their publication an act of necessity, rather than of vanity.

It is notorious how many volumes have been published under the title of his Correspondence, with promises still of more, and open and repeated offers of encouragement to all persons who should send any letters of his for the press. It is as notorious what methods were taken to procure them, even from the publisher's own accounts in his prefaces, viz. by transacting with people in necessities, * or of abandoned † characters, or such as dealt without names in the ‡ dark. Upon a quarrel with one of these last,

* See the preface to vol. i. of a book called *Mr Pope's Literary Correspondence*.

† Postscript to the preface to vol. iv.

‡ Narrative and anecdotes before vol. ii.

he betrayed himself so far, as to appeal to the public in narratives and advertisements: like that Irish highwayman a few years before, who preferred a bill against his companion for not sharing equally in the money, rings and watches, they had traded for in partnership upon Hounslow-heath.

Several have been printed in his name which he never writ, and addressed to persons to whom they never were written *: counterfeited as from Bishop Atterbury to him, which neither that bishop nor he ever saw †; and advertised even after that period, when it was made felony to correspond with him.

I know not how it has been this author's fate, whom both his situation and his temper have all his life excluded from rivalling any man, in any pretension, (except that of pleasing by poetry) to have been as much aspersed and written at, as any first minister of his time: pamphlets and newspapers have been full of him, nor was it *there only* that a private man, who never troubled either the world or common conversation with his opinions of religion or government, has been represented as a dangerous member of society, a bigotted Papist, and an enemy to the establishment. The unwarrantable publication of his letters hath at last done him this service, to shew he has constantly enjoyed the friendship of worthy men; and that if a catalogue were to be taken of his friends and his enemies, he needs not blush at either. Many of them having been written on the most trying occurrences, and all in the openness of friendship, are a proof what were his real sentiments, as they

* In vol. iii. Letters from Mr Pope to Mrs Blount, &c.

† Vol. ii. of the same, 8vo. p. 20. and at the end of the edition of his letters in 12mo, by the bookfellers of London and Westminster; and of the last edition in 12mo, printed for T. Cooper, 1735.

flowed warm from the heart, and fresh from the occasion; without the least thought that ever the world should be witness to them. Had he sat down with a design to draw his own picture, he could not have done it so truly; for whoever sits for it (whether to himself or another) will inevitably find the features more composed than his appear in these letters. But if an author's hand, like a painter's, be more distinguishable in a slight sketch than in a finished picture, this very carelessness will make them the better known from such counterfeits as have been, and may be imputed to him, either through a mercenary or a malicious design.

We hope it is needless to say, he is not accountable for several passages in the surreptitious editions of those letters, which are such as no man, of common sense would have published himself. The errors of the press were almost innumerable, and could not but be extremely multiplied in so many repeated editions, by the avarice and negligence of piratical printers, to not one of whom he ever gave the least title, or any other encouragement than that of not prosecuting them.

For the *Chasms* in the correspondence, we had not the means to supply them, the author having destroyed too many letters to preserve any series. Nor would he go about to amend them, except by the omission of some passages, improper, or at least impertinent, to be divulged to the public; or of such entire letters, as were either not his, or not approved of by him.

He has been very sparing of those of his friends, and thought it a respect shown to their memory, to suppress in particular such as were most in his favour. As it is not to *Vanity* but to *Friendship* that

he intends this monument, he would save his enemies the mortification of showing any further how well their betters have thought of him; and at the same time secure from their censure his living friends, who (he promises them) shall never be put to the blush, this way at least, for their partiality to him.

But however this Collection may be received, we cannot but lament the *cause*, and the *necessity* of such a publication, and heartily wish no honest man may be reduced to the same. To state the case fairly in the present situation. A bookseller advertises his intention to publish your letters: he openly promises encouragement, or even pecuniary rewards, to those who will help him to any, and engages to insert whatever they shall send. Any scandal is sure of a reception, and any enemy who sends it screened from a discovery. Any domestic or servant, who can snatch a letter from your pocket or cabinet, is encouraged to that vile practice. If the quantity falls short of a volume, any thing else shall be joined with it (more especially scandal) which the collector can think for his interest, all recommended under your name: you have not only theft to fear, but forgery. Any bookseller, though conscious in what manner they were obtained, not caring what may be the consequence to your fame or quiet, will sell and disperse them in town and country. The better your reputation is, the more your name will cause them to be demanded, and consequently the more you will be injured. The injury is of such a nature, as the law (which does not punish for *intentions*) cannot prevent; and when done, may punish, but not redress. You are therefore reduced either to enter into a personal treaty with such a man, (which though the readiest, is the meanest of all methods) or to take such other

measures to suppress them, as are contrary to your inclination, or to publish them, as are contrary to your modesty : otherwise your fame and your property suffer alike; you are at once exposed and plundered. As an *author*, you are deprived of that power which above all others constitutes a good one, the power of rejecting, and the right of judging for yourself, what pieces it may be most useful, entertaining, or reputable to publish, at the time and in the manner you think best. As a *man*, you are deprived of the right even over your own sentiment, of the privilege of every human creature to divulge or conceal them; of the advantage of your second thoughts; and of all the benefit of your prudence, your candour, or your modesty. As a *member of society*, you are yet more injured; your private conduct, your domestic concerns, your family secrets, your passions, your tenderneſſes, your weakneſſes, are exposed to the misconstruction or resentment of some, to the censure or impertinence of the whole world. The printing private letters in such a manner, is the worst sort of *betraying conversation*, as it has evidently the most extensive, and the most lasting ill consequences. It is the highest offence against *society*, as it renders the most dear and intimate intercourse of friend with friend, and the most necessary commerce of man with man, unsafe, and to be dreaded. To open letters is esteemed the greatest breach of honour; even to look into them already opened or accidentally dropt, is held an ungenerous, if not an immoral act. What then can be thought of the procuring them merely by fraud, and the printing them merely for lucre? We cannot but conclude every honest man will wish, that, if the laws have as yet provided no adequate remedy, one at least may be found, to prevent so great and growing an evil.



L E T T E R S

O F

M R P O P E,

A N D

Several of his FRIENDS.

Quo desiderio veteres revocamus amores.
Atque olim amissas flemus amicitias !

Catull.



L E T T E R S

T O A N D F R O M

M R W Y C H E R L E Y,

From the Year 1704, to 1710.

C 3



L E T T E R S

TO AND FROM

MR W Y C H E R L E Y *.

L E T T E R I.

Binfield in Wipdfor-Forest, Dec. 26, 1704 †.

IT was certainly a great satisfaction to me to see and converse with a man, whom in his writings I had so long known with pleasure; but it was a high addition to it, to hear you, at our very first meeting, doing justice to your dead friend Mr Dryden. I was not so happy as to know him: *Virgilium tantum vidi*. Had I been born early enough, I must have known and lov'd him: for I have been assured, not only by yourself, but by Mr Congreve and Sir Wil-

* If one were to judge of this set of Letters by the manner of thinking and turn of expression, one should conclude they had been all mistitled; and that the letters given to the boy of sixteen, were written by the man of seventy, and so on the contrary: such sober sense, such gravity of manners, and so much judgment and knowledge of composition, enlivened with the sprightliness of manly wit, distinguish those of Mr Pope: while, on the other hand, a childish jealousy, a puerile affectation, an attention and lying at catch for *turns* and *points*, together with a total ignorance and contempt of order, of method, and of all relation of the parts to one another to compose a reasonable whole, make up the character of those of Mr Wycherley.

† The Author's age then sixteen.

liam Trumbal, that his personal qualities were as amiable as his poetical, notwithstanding the many libellous misrepresentations of them, against which the former of these gentlemen has told me he will one day vindicate him*. I suppose those injuries were begun by the violence of party, but 'tis no doubt they were continued by envy at his success and fame. And those scribblers who attacked him in his latter times, were only like gnats in a summer's evening, which are never very troublesome but in the finest and most glorious season; for his fire, like the sun's, shined clearest towards its setting.

You must not therefore imagine, that when you told me my own performances were above those critics, I was so vain as to believe it; and yet I may not be so humble as to think myself quite below their notice: for critics, as they are birds of prey, have ever a natural inclination to carrion: and though such poor writers as I are but beggars, no beggar is so poor but he can keep a cur, and no author is so beggarly but he can keep a critic. I am far from thinking the attacks of such people either any honour or dishonour even to me, much less to Mr Dryden. I agree with you, that whatever lesser wits have risen since his death, are but like stars appearing when the sun is set, that twinkle only in his absence, and with the rays they have borrowed from him. Our wit (as you call it) is but reflection or imitation, therefore scarce to be called ours. True wit, I believe, may be defined a justness of thought, and a facility of expression; or (in the midwives' phrase) a perfect conception, with an easy delivery.

* He since did so, in his dedication to the Duke of Newcastle, prefixed to the duodecimo edition of Dryden's plays, 1717.



However, this is far from a complete definition; pray help me to a better, as I doubt not you can.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R II.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

Jan. 25. 1704,-5.

I HAVE been so busy of late in correcting and transcribing some of my madrigals for a great man or two who desired to see them, that I have with your pardon) omitted to return you an answer to your most ingenious letter: so scribblers to the public, like bankers to the public, are profuse in their voluntary loans to it, whilst they forget to pay their more private and particular, as more just debts, to their best and nearest friends. However, I hope you, who have as much good nature as good sense (since they generally are companions) will have patience with a debtor who has an inclination to pay you his obligations, if he had wherewithal ready about him; and in the mean time should consider, when you have obliged me beyond my present power of returning the favour, that a debtor may be an honest man, if he but intends to be just when he is able, though late. But I should be less just to you, the more I thought I could make a return to so much profuseness of wit and humanity together; which though they seldom accompany each other in other men, are in you so equally met, I know not in which you most abound. But so much for my opinion of you, which is, that your wit and ingenuity is equalled by nothing but your judgment or modesty, which (though it be to please myself) I must no more offend, than I can do either right.

Therefore I will say no more now of them, than that your good wit never forfeited your good judgement, but in your partiality to me and mine; so that if it were possible for a hardened scribbler to be vainer than he is, what you write of me would make me more conceited than what I scribble myself: yet, I must confess, I ought to be more humbled by your praise than exalted, which commends my little sense with so much more of yours, that I am disparaged and disheartened by your commendations; who give me an example of your wit in the first part of your letter, and a definition of it in the last; to make writing well (that is, like you) more difficult to me than ever it was before. Thus the more great and just your example and definition of wit are, the less I am capable to follow them. Then the best way of shewing my judgement, after having seen how you write, is to leave off writing; and the best way to shew my friendship to you, is to put an end to your trouble, and to conclude

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R III.

March 25, 1705.

WHEN I write to you, I foresee a long letter, and ought to beg your patience before hand; for if it proves the longest, it will be of course the worst I have troubled you with. Yet to express my gratitude at large for your obliging letter, is not more my duty than my interest; as some people will abundantly thank you for one piece of kindness, to put you in mind of bestowing another. The more favourable you are to me, the more distinctly I see my faults; spots and blemishes, you know, are never so

FROM MR WYCHERLEY. 35

plainly discovered as in the brightest sunshine. Thus I am mortified by those commendations which were designed to encourage me: for praise to a young wit, is like rain to a tender flower; if it be moderately bestowed, it cheers and revives; but if too lavishly, overcharges and depresses him. Most men in years, as they are generally discouragers of youth, are like old trees, that, being past bearing themselves, will suffer no young plants to flourish beneath them: but as if it were not enough to have out-done all your coevals in wit, you will excel them in good-nature too. As for ‡ my green essays, if you find any pleasure in them, it must be such as a man naturally takes in observing the first shoots and buddings of a tree which he has raised himself; and 'tis impossible they should be esteemed any otherwise, than as we value fruits for being early, which nevertheless are the most insipid, and the worst of the year. In a word, I must blame you for treating me with so much compliment, which is at best but the smoke of friendship. I neither write, nor converse with you, to gain your praise, but your affection. Be so much my friend as to appear my enemy, and tell me my faults, if not as a young man, at least as an unexperienced Writer.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R IV.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

March 29, 1705.

YOUR letter of the 25th of March I have received, which was more welcome to me than any thing could be out of the country, though it

‡ His Pastorals, written at sixteen years of age.

were one's rent due that day; and I can find no fault with it, but that it charges me with want of sincerity, or justice, for giving you your due; who should not let your modesty be so unjust to your merit, as to reject what is due to it, and call that compliment, which is so short of your desert, that it is rather degrading than exalting you. But if compliment be the smoke only of friendship, (as you say), however, you must allow there is no smoke but there is some fire; and as the sacrifice of incense offered to the gods would not have been half so sweet to others, if it had not been for its smoke; so friendship, like love, cannot be without some incense, to perfume the name it would praise and immortalize. But since you say you do not write to me to gain my praise, but my affection, pray how is it possible to have the one without the other? we must admire before we love. You affirm, you would have me so much your friend as to appear your enemy, and find out your faults rather than your perfections; but (my friend) that would be so hard to do, that I, who love no difficulties, can't be persuaded to it. Besides, the vanity of a scribbler is such, that he will never part with his own judgment to gratify another's; especially when he must take pains to do it: and though I am proud to be of your opinion, when you talk of any thing or man but yourself, I cannot suffer you to murder your fame with your own hand, without opposing you; especially when you say your last letter is the worst (since the longest) you have favoured me with; which I therefore think the best, as the longest life (if a good one) is the best; as it yields the more variety, and is the more exemplary; as a chearful summer's day, though longer than a

dull one in the winter, is less tedious and more entertaining. Therefore let but your friendship be like your letter, as lasting as it is agreeable, and it can never be tedious, but more acceptable and obliging to

Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

April 7, 1705.

I HAVE received yours of the 5th, wherein your modesty refuses the just praises I give you, by which you lay claim to more, as a bishop gains his bishopric by saying he will not episcopate; but I must confess, whilst I displease you by commending you, I please myself: just as incense is sweeter to the offerer, than the deity to whom 'tis offered, by his being so much above it: for indeed every man partakes of the praise he gives, when it is so justly given.

As to my inquiry after your intrigues with the muses, you may allow me to make it, since no old man can give so young, so great, and able a favourite of theirs jealousy. I am, in my inquiry, like old Sir Bernard Gascoign, who used to say, that when he was grown too old to have his visits admitted alone by the ladies, he always took along with him a young man to ensure his welcome to them; for had he come alone he had been rejected, only because his visits were not scandalous to them. So I am (like an old rook, who is ruined by gaming) forced to live on the good fortune of the pushing young men, whose fancies are so vigorous that they ensure their

success in their adventures with the Muses, by their strength of imagination.

Your papers are safe in my custody (you may be sure) from any one's theft but my own; for 'tis as dangerous to trust a scribbler with your wit, as a gamester with the custody of your money.—If you happen to come to town, you will make it more difficult for me to leave it, who am,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R V I.

April 30, 1705.

I CANNOT contend with you: you must give me leave at once to wave all your compliments, and to collect only this in general from them, that your design is to encourage me. But I separate from all the rest that paragraph or two, in which you make me so warm an offer of your friendship. Were I possessed of that, it would put an end to all those speeches with which you now make me blush; and change them to wholesome advices, and free sentiments, which might make me wiser and happier. I know 'tis the general opinion, that friendship is best contracted betwixt persons of equal age; but I have so much interest to be of another mind, that you must pardon me if I cannot forbear telling you a few notions of mine, in opposition to that opinion.

In the first place, 'tis observable that the love we bear to our friends, is generally caused by our finding the same dispositions in them which we feel in ourselves. This is but self-love at the bottom; whereas the affection betwixt people of different ages cannot well be so, the inclinations of such being commonly various. The friendship of two young men

is often occasioned by love of pleasure or voluptuousness, each being desirous, for his own sake, of one to assist or encourage him in the courses he pursues; as that of two old men is frequently on the score of some profit, lucre, or design upon others. Now, as a young man, who is less acquainted with the ways of the world, has in all probability less of interest; and an old man; who may be weary of himself, has, or should have less of self-love; so the friendship between them is the more likely to be true, and unmixed with too much self-regard. One may add to this, that such a friendship is of greater use and advantage to both; for the old man will grow gay and agreeable to please the young one; and the young man more discreet and prudent by the help of the old one: so it may prove a cure of those epidemical diseases of age and youth, sourness and madness. I hope you will not need many arguments to convince you of the possibility of this; one alone abundantly satisfies me, and convinces to the heart; which is; that * young as I am, and old as you are, I am your entirely affectionate, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

June 23, 1705.

I SHOULD believe myself happy in your good opinion, but that you treat me so much in a style of compliment. It hath been observed of women, that they are more subject in their youth to be touched with vanity than men, on account of their being generally treated this way; but the weakest women

* Mr Wycherley was at this time about seventy years old; Mr Pope under seventeen.

are not more weak than that class of men who are thought to pique themselves upon their wit. The world is never wanting, when a coxcomb is accomplishing himself, to help to give him the finishing stroke.

Every man is apt to think his neighbour overstocked with vanity, yet I cannot but fancy there are certain times when most people are in a disposition of being informed; and 'tis incredible what a vast good a little truth might do, spoken in such seasons. A small alms will do a great kindness to people in extreme necessity.

I could name an acquaintance of yours, who would at this time think himself more obliged to you for the information of his faults, than the confirmation of his follies. If you would make those the subject of a letter, it might be as long as I could with your letters always were.

I do not wonder you have hitherto found some difficulty (as you are pleased to say) in writing to me, since you have always chosen the task of commending me: take but the other way, and I dare engage you will find none at all.

As for my verses, which you praise so much, I may truly say they have never been the cause of any vanity in me, except what they gave me when they first occasioned my acquaintance with you. But I have several times since been in danger of this vice; as often, I mean, as I received any letters from you. 'Tis certain, the greatest magnifying glasses in the world are a man's own eyes, when they look upon his own person; yet even in those, I cannot fancy myself so extremely like Alexander the Great, as you would persuade me. If I must be like him, 'tis you

will make me so, by complimenting me into a better opinion of myself than I deserve: they made him think he was the son of Jupiter, and you assure me I am a man of parts. But is this all you can say to my honour? you said ten times as much before, when you call'd me your friend. After having made me believe I possessed a share in your affection, to treat me with compliments and sweet sayings, is like the proceeding with poor Sancha Panca: they persuaded him that he enjoyed a great dominion, and then gave him nothing to subsist upon but wassers and marmalade. In our days the greatest obligation you can lay upon a wit, is to make a fool of him. For as when madmen are found incurable, wise men give them their way, and please them as well as they can; so when those incorrigible things, Poets, are once irrecoverably be-mus'd, the best way both to quiet them, and secure yourself from the effects of their frenzy, is to feed their vanity; which indeed, for the most part, is all that is fed in a poet.

You may believe me, I could be heartily glad that all you say were as true, applied to me, as it would be to yourself, for several weighty reasons; but for none so much as that I might be to you what you deserve; whereas I can now be no more than is consistent with the small, though utmost capacity of, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

Oct. 26. 1705.

I HAVE now changed the scene from the town to the country; from Will's coffee-house to Windsor-forest. I find no other difference than this betwixt the common town-wits and the downright country-

fools; that the first are partly in the wrong, with a little more flourish and gaiety; and the last neither in the right nor the wrong, but confirmed in a stupid settled medium betwixt both. However, methinks those are most in the right, who quietly and easily resign themselves over to the gentle reign of dulness, which the wits must do at last, though after a great deal of noise and resistance. Ours are a sort of modest inoffensive people, who neither have sense, nor pretend to have any, but enjoy a jovial sort of dulness: they are commonly known in the world by the name of honest, civil gentlemen: they live, much as they ride, at random; a kind of hunting life, pursuing with earnestness and hazard something not worth catching; never in the way, nor out of it. I can't but prefer solitude to the company of all these: for tho' a man's self may possibly be the worst fellow to converse with in the world, yet one would think the company of a person whom we have the greatest regard to and affection for, could not be very unpleasant. As a man in love with a mistress desires no conversation but hers, so a man in love with himself (as most men are) may be pleased with his own. Besides, if the truest or most useful knowledge be the knowledge of ourselves, solitude, conducting most to make us look into ourselves, should be the most instructive state of life. We see nothing more commonly than men, who for the sake of the circumstantial part and mere outside of life, have been half their days rambling out of their nature, and ought to be sent into solitude to study themselves over again. People are usually spoiled, instead of being taught, at their coming into the world:

whereas by being more conversant with obscurity, without any pains, they would naturally follow what they were meant for. In a word, if a man be a coxcomb, solitude is his best school; and if he be a fool, it is his best sanctuary.

These are good reasons for my own stay here, but I wish I could give you any for your coming hither, except that I earnestly invite you. And yet I can't help saying I have suffered a great deal of discontent that you do not come, though I so little merit that you should.

I must complain of the shortness of your last. Those who have most wit, like those who have most money, are generally most sparing of either.

L E T T E R IX.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

Nov. 5. 1705.

YOURS of the 20th of October I have received, as I have always done yours, with no little satisfaction, and am proud to discover by it, that you find fault with the shortness of mine, which I think the best excuse for it: and though they (as you say) who have most wit or money are most sparing of either, there are some who appear poor to be thought rich, and are poor, which is my case. I cannot but rejoice, that you have undergone so much discontent for want of my company; but if you have a mind to punish me for my fault, (which I could not help), defer your coming to town, and you will do it effectually. But I know your charity always exceeds your revenge, so that I will not despair of seeing you, and, in return to your inviting me to your Forest, in-

vite you to my forest, the town; where the beasts that inhabit, tame or wild, of long ears or horns, pursue one another either out of love or hatred. You may have the pleasure to see one pack of bloodhounds pursue another herd of brutes, to bring each other to their fall, which is their whole sport: or, if you affect a less bloody chace, you may see a pack of spaniels, called *lovers*, in a hot pursuit of a two-legged vixen, who only flies the whole loud pack to be singled out by one dog, who runs mute to catch her up the sooner from the rest, as they are making a noise to the loss of their game. In fine, this is the time for all sorts of sport in the town, when those of the country cease; therefore leave your forest of beasts for ours of brutes, called *men*, who now in full cry (packed by the Court or country) run down in the House of Commons a deserted horned beast of the Court, to the satisfaction of their spectators: besides, (more for your diversion), you may see not only the two great Playhouses of the nation, those of the Lords and Commons, in dispute with one another; but the two other Playhouses in high contest, because the members of one house are removed up to the other, as it is often done by the Court for reasons of state: insomuch that the Lower Houses, (I mean the playhouses), are going to act tragedies on one another without doors, and the Sovereign is put to it (as it often happens in the other two houses), to silence one or both, to keep peace between them. Now I have told you all the news of the town.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

Feb. 5. 1705, -6.

I HAVE received your kind letter, with my * paper to Mr Dryden corrected. I own you have made more of it by making it less, as the Dutch are said to burn half the spices they bring home, to enhance the price of the remainder, so to be greater gainers by their loss, which is indeed my case now. You have pruned my fading laurels of some superfluous, sapless, and dead branches, to make the remainder live the longer: thus, like your master Apollo, you are at once a poet and a physician.

Now, Sir, as to my impudent invitation of you to the town, your good-nature was the first cause of my confident request; but excuse me, I must, I see, say no more upon this subject, since I find you a little too nice to be dealt freely with; though you have given me some encouragement to hope our friendship might be without shyness or criminal modesty; for a friend, like a mistress, though he is not to be mercenary, to be true, yet ought not to refuse a friend's kindness, because it is small or trivial. I have told you, I think, what a Spanish Lady said to her poor poetical gallant, that a Queen, if she had to do with a groom, would expect a mark of his kindness from him, though it were but his curry-comb. But you and I will dispute this matter, when I am so happy as to see you here; and perhaps 'tis the only

* The same which was printed in the year 1717, in a miscellany of Bern. Lintot's, and in the posthumous works of Mr Wycherley.

dispute in which I might hope to have the better of you.

Now, Sir, to make you another excuse for my boldness in inviting you to town, I designed to leave with you some more of my papers, (since these return so much better out of your hands than they went from mine), for I intended, as I told you formerly, to spend a month or six weeks, this summer, near you in the country. You may be assured there is nothing I desire so much as an improvement of your friendship.

LETTER XI.

April 10, 1706.

BY one of yours, of the last month, you desire me to select, if possible, some things from the * first volume of your Miscellanies, which may be altered so as to appear again. I doubted your meaning in this; whether it was to pick out the best of those verses, (as those on the Idleness of Business, on Ignorance, on Laziness, &c.) to make the method and numbers exact, and avoid repetitions? For though (upon reading 'em on this occasion) I believe they might receive such an alteration with advantage; yet they would not be changed so much; but any one would know 'em for the same at first sight. Or, if you mean to improve the worst pieces? which are such as, to render them very good, would require great addition, and almost the entire new writing of them. Or, lastly, if you mean the middle sort, as the Songs and Love-verses? For these will need only to be shortened, to omit repetition; the words remaining very little different from what they were before.

* Printed in folio, in the year 1704.

Pray, let me know your mind in this, for I am utterly at a loss. Yet I have tried what I could do to some of the songs, and the poems on Laziness and Ignorance, but can't (even in my own partial judgment) think my alterations much to the purpose: so that I must needs desire you would apply your care wholly at present to those which are yet unpublished, of which there are more than enough to make a considerable volume of full as good ones, nay, I believe of better than volume first, which I could wish you would defer, at least till you have finished these that are yet unprinted.

I send you a sample of some few of these: namely, the verses to Mr Waller in his old age; your new ones on the Duke of Marlborough, and two others. I have done all that I thought could be of advantage to them: some I have contracted, as we do sun-beams, to improve their energy and force: some I have taken quite away, as we take branches from a tree, to add to the fruit; others I have entirely new expressed, and turned more into poetry. Donne (like one of his successors) had infinitely more wit than he wanted versification; for the great dealers of wit, like those in trade, take least pains to set off their goods; while the haberdashers of small wit, spare for no decorations or ornaments. You have commissioned me to paint your shop, and I have done my best to brush you up like your neighbours *. But I can no more pretend to the merit

* Several of Mr Pope's lines, very easy to be distinguished, may be found in the posthumous editions of Wycherley's Poems; particularly those on Solitude, on the Public, and on the Mixed Life.

of the production, than a midwife to the virtues and good qualities of the child she helps into the light.

The few things I have entirely added, you will excuse; you may take them lawfully for your own, because they are no more than sparks lighted up by your fire: and you may omit them at last, if you think them but squibs in your triumphs.

LETTER XII.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

Nov. 11, 1707.

I RECEIVED yours of the 9th yesterday, which has (like the rest of your letters), at once pleased and instructed me; so that, I assure you, you can no more write too much to your absent friends, than speak too much to the present. This is a truth that all men own who have either seen your writings, or heard your discourse; enough to make others show their judgment, in ceasing to write or talk, especially to you, or in your company. However, I speak or write to you, not to please you, but myself; since I provoke your answers, which, whilst they humble me, give me vanity; though I am lessened by you, even when you commend me: since you commend my little sense with so much more of yours, that you put me out of countenance, whilst you would keep me in it. So that you have found a way (against the custom of great wits) to shew even a great deal of good nature with a great deal of good sense.

I thank you for the book you promised me, by which, I find, you would not only correct my lines, but my life.

As to the damned verses I entrusted you with, I

hope you will let them undergo your purgatory, to save them from the people's damning them: since the critics, who are generally the first damned in this life, like the damned below, never leave to bring those above them under their own circumstances. I beg you to peruse my papers, and select what you think best or most tolerable, and look over them again; for I resolve suddenly to print some of them, as a hardened old gamester will (in spite of all former ill-usage by Fortune) push on an ill hand in expectation of recovering himself; especially since I have such a *croupier* or second to stand by me as Mr Pope.

L E T T E R XIII.

Nov. 20, 1707.

MR ENGLEFIELD being on his journey to London, tells me I must write to you by him, which I do, not more to comply with his desire, than to gratify my own; tho' I did it so lately by the messenger you sent hither: I take it too as an opportunity of sending you the fair copy of the poem * on Dulness, which was not then finish'd, and which I should not care to hazard by the common post. Mr Englefield is ignorant of the contents, and I hope your prudence will let him remain so, for my sake no less than your own: since if you should reveal any thing of this nature, it would be no wonder reports should be rais'd, and there are those (I fear) who would be ready to improve them to my disadvantage. I am

* The original of it in blots, and with figures of the references from copy to copy, in Mr Pope's hand, is yet extant among other such Brouillions of Mr Wycherley's poems, corrected by him.

Sorry you told the great man, whom you met in the Court of Requests, that your papers were in my hands: no man alive shall ever know any such thing from me; and I give you this warning besides, that tho' yourself should say I had any ways assisted you, I am notwithstanding resolv'd to deny it.

The method of the copy I send you is very different from what it was, and much more regular: for the better help of your memory, I desire you to compare it by the figures in the margin, answering to the same in this letter. The poem is now divided into four parts, mark'd with the literal figures 1. 2. 3. 4. The first contains the Praise of Dulness, and shews how upon several suppositions it passes for, 1. religion; 2. philosophy; 3. example; 4. wit; and, 5. the cause of wit, and the end of it. The second part contains the Advantages of Dulness; 1st, in business; and 2dly, at Court; where the similitudes of the biases of a bowl, and the weights of a clock, are directly tending to the subject, tho' introduced before in a place where there was no mention made of those advantages (which was your only objection to my adding them.) The third contains the Happiness of Dulness in all stations, and shews in a great many particulars, that it is so fortunate as to be esteemed some good quality or other in all sorts of people; that it is thought quiet, sense, caution, policy, prudence, majesty, valour, circumspection, honesty, &c. The fourth part I have wholly added, as a climax which sums up all the praise, advantage, and happiness of Dulness in a few words *, and strengthens

* This is totally omitted in the present Edition. Some of the lines are these:

them by the opposition of the disgrace, disadvantage, and unhappiness of Wit, with which it concludes.

Tho' the whole be as short again as at first, there is not one thought omitted, but what is a repetition of something in your first volume, or in this very paper: some thoughts are contracted, where they seem'd encompass'd with too many words; and some new express'd, or added, where I thought there wanted heightning (as you'll see particularly in the Simile of the clock-weights †;) and the versification throughout is, I believe, such as no body can be shock'd at. The repeated permissions you give me of dealing freely with you, will (I hope) excuse what I have done: for if I have not spar'd you when I thought severity would do you a kindness, I have not mangled you where I thought there was no absolute need of amputation. As to particulars, I can satisfy you better when we meet; in the mean time pray write to me when you can; you cannot too often.

" Thus Dulness, the safe opiate of the mind,

" The last kind refuge weary wit can find;

" Fit for all stations, and in each content,

" Is satisfy'd, secure, and innocent;

" No pains it takes, and no offence it gives,

" Unfear'd, unhated, undisturb'd it lives;" &c.

It was originally thus express'd:

" As Clocks run fastest when most lead is on;"

in a Letter of Mr Pope to Mr Wycherley, dated April 3, 1705, and in a paper of verses of his, To the Author of a poem called *Successio*, which got out in a miscellany in 1712, three years before Mr Wycherley died, and two after he had laid aside the whole design of publishing any poems.

† These two similes of the *bias* of a bowl, and the weights of a clock, were at length put into the first book of the *Dunciad*. And thus we have the history of their birth, fortunes, and final establishment.

LETTER XIV.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

Nov. 22, 1707.

YOU may see by my style, I had the happiness and satisfaction to receive yesterday, by the hands of Mr Englefield, your extreme kind and obliging letter of the 20th of this month; which, like all the rest of yours, did at once mortify me, and make me vain; since it tells me with so much more wit, sense, and kindness than mine can express, that my letters are always welcome to you. So that even while your kindness invites me to write to you, your wit and judgment forbid me; since I may return you a letter, but never an answer.

Now, as for my owning your assistance to me, in overlooking my unmusical numbers, and harsher sense, and correcting them both with your genius or judgment; I must tell you I always own it (in spite of your unpoetic modesty) who would do with your friendship as your charity; conceal your bounty to magnify the obligation; and even whilst you lay on your friend the favour, acquit him of the debt: but that shall not serve your turn; I will always own, 'tis my infallible Pope has, or would redeem me from a poetical damning, the second time; and save my rhymes from being condemn'd to the critics flames to all eternity: but (by the faith you profess) you know your works of supererogation, transferr'd upon an humble, acknowledging sinner, may save even him; having good works enough of your own besides, to ensure yours, and their immortality.

And now for the pains you have taken to recom-

mend my Dulness, by making it more methodical, I give you a thousand thanks; since true and natural dulness is shewn more by its pretence to form and method, as the sprightliness of wit by its despising both. I thank you a thousand times for your repeated invitations to come to Binfield. You will find, it will be as hard for you to get quit of my mercenary kindness to you, as it would for me to deserve, or return yours; however, it shall be the endeavour of my future life, as it will be to demonstrate myself

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XV.

Nov. 29, 1707.

THE compliments you make me, in regard of any inconsiderable service I could do you, are very unkind, and do but tell me in other words, that my friend has so mean an opinion of me, as to think I expect acknowledgments for trifles: which upon my faith I shall equally take amiss, whether made to myself, or to any other. For God's sake (my dear friend) think better of me, and believe I desire no sort of favour so much, as that of serving you more considerably than I have been yet able to do.

I shall proceed in this manner with some others of your pieces; but since you desire I would not deface your copy for the future, and only mark the repetitions; I must, as soon as I've mark'd these, transcribe what is left on another paper: and in that blot, alter, and add all I can devise, for their improvement. For you are sensible, the omission of repetitions is but one, and the easiest part, of yours and my design; there remaining besides to rectify the method, to con-

nect the matter, and to mend the expression and verification. I will go next upon the poems of Solitude, on the Public, and on the Mixt Life, the Bill of Fare, the Praises of Avarice, and some others.

I must take notice of what you say, of "my pains to make your dulness methodical;" and of your hint, "that the sprightliness of wit despises method." This is true enough, if by wit you mean no more than fancy or conceit; but in the better notion of wit, considered as propriety, surely method is not only necessary for perspicuity and harmony of parts, but gives beauty even to the minute and particular thoughts, which receive an additional advantage from those which precede or follow in their due place. You remember a simile Mr Dryden us'd in conversation, of feathers in the crowns of the wild Indians, which they not only chuse for the beauty of their colours, but place them in such a manner as to reflect a lustre on each other. I will not disguise any of my sentiments from you: to methodise in your case, is full as necessary as to strike out; otherwise you had better destroy the whole frame, and reduce them into single thoughts in prose, like Rochefoucault, as I have more than once hinted to you.

LETTER XVI.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

Feb. 28, 1707-8.

I HAVE had yours of the 23d of this instant, for which I give you many thanks, since I find by it, that even absence (the usual bane of love or friendship) cannot lessen yours, no more than mine. As to your hearing of my being ill, I am glad and sorry for the

report: in the first place, glad that it was not true; and in the next, sorry that it shou'd give you any disturbance or concern more than ordinary for me; for which, as well as your concern for my future well-being or life, I think myself most eternally obliged to you; assuring, your concern for either will make me more careful of both. Yet for your sake I love this life so well, that I shall the less think of the other: but 'tis in your power to ensure my happiness in one and the other, both by your society, and good example; so not only contribute to my felicity here, but hereafter.

Now as to your excuse for the plainness of your style, I must needs tell you, that friendship is much more acceptable to a true friend than wit, which is generally false reasoning; and a friend's reprimand often shews more friendship than his compliment: nay love, which is more than friendship, is often seen by our friend's correction of our follies or crimes. Upon this test of your friendship I intend to put you, when I return to London, and thence to you at Binfield, which, I hope, will be within a month.

Next to the news of your good health, I am pleas'd with the good news of your going to print some of your Poems, and proud to be known by them to the public for your friend; who intend (perhaps the same way) to be revenged of you for your kindness, by taking your name in vain in some of my future madrigals: yet so as to let the world know, my love or esteem for you are no more poetic than my talent in scribbling. But of all the arts of fiction, I desire you to believe I want that of feigning friendship, and that I am sincerely

Yours, &c.

LETTER XVII.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

May 13, 1708.

I HAVE received yours of the first of May. Your pastoral muse outshines in her modest and natural dress, all Apollo's court-ladies, in their more artful, laboured, and costly finery. Therefore I am glad to find by your letter you design your country beauty of a muse shall appear at court and in public, to outshine all the farded, lewd, confident, affected town-dowdies, who aim at being honoured only to their shame; but her artful innocence (on the contrary) will gain more honour as she becomes public; and, in spite of custom, will bring modesty again into fashion, or at least make her sister rivals of this age blush for spite, if not for shame. As for my stale, antiquated, poetical puffs, whom you would keep in countenance, by saying she has once been tolerable, and would yet pass muster by a little licking over; it is true that (like most vain antiquated jades which have once been passable) she yet affects youthfulness in her age, and would still gain a few admirers (who the more she seeks or labours for their liking, are but more her contemners.) Nevertheless she is resolved henceforth to be so cautious as to appear very little more in the world, except it be as an attendant on your muse, or as a foil, not a rival to her wit, or fame: so that let your country gentlewoman appear when she will in the world *, my old worn-out jade of a lost reputation

* This, and what follows, is a full confutation of John Dennis and others, who asserted that Mr Pope wrote these

shall be her attendant into it, to procure her admirers; as an old whore, who can get no more friends of her own, bawds for others, to make sport or pleasure yet, one way or other, for mankind. I approve of your making Tonson your muse's introducer into the world, or master of the ceremonies, who has been so long a pimp, or gentleman-usher to the muses.

I wish you good fortune; since a man with store of wit, as store of money, without the help of good fortune, will never be popular; but I wish you a great many admirers, which will be some credit to my judgment as well as your wit, who always thought you had a great deal, and am.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XVIII.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

May 17, 1709.

I MUST thank you for a book of your Miscellanies, which Tonson sent me, I suppose, by your order; and all I can tell you of it is, that nothing has lately been better received by the public than your part of it. You have only displeased the critics by pleasing them too well; having not left them a word to say for themselves, against you and your

verses on himself (tho' publish'd by Mr Wycherley six years before his death.) We find here it was a voluntary act of his, promised before-hand, and written while Mr Pope was absent. The first Brouillon of these verses, and the second copy with corrections, are both yet extant in Mr Wycherley's own hand. In another of his letters of May 18, 1708, are these words: "I have made a damn'd compliment in verse upon the printing your Pastorals, which you shall see when you see me."

performances; so that, now your hand is in, you must persevere, till my prophecies of you be fulfilled. In earnest, all the best judges of good sense or poetry, are admirers of yours; and like your part of the book so well, that the rest is liked the worse. This is true upon my word, without compliment; so that your first success* will make you for all your life a poet, in spite of your wit; for a poet's success at first, like a gamester's fortune at first, is like to make him a loser at last, and to be undone by his good fortune and merit.

But hitherto your Miscellanies have safely run the gantlet, through all the coffeehouses; which are now entertained with a whimsical new newspaper, called the TATLER, which I suppose you have seen. This is the newest thing I can tell you of, except it be of the peace, which now (most people say) is drawing to such a conclusion, as all Europe is, or must be satisfied with: so poverty, you see, which makes peace in Westminster-hall, makes it likewise in the camp or field, throughout the world. Peace then be to you, and to me, who am now grown peaceful, and will have no contest with any man, but him who says he is more your friend or humble servant than

Your, &c.

LETTER XIX.

May 20, 1709.

I AM glad you received the * Miscellany, if it were only to show you that there are as bad poets in this nation as your servant. This modern custom of appearing in miscellanies, is very useful to the poets, who, like other thieves, escape by getting into

* Jacob Tonson's sixth Vol. of Miscellany Poems.

a crowd, and herd together like banditti, safe only in their multitude. Methinks Strada has given a good description of these kind of collections; "Nullus homo die mortalium aut nascitur, aut moritur, aut proeliatur, aut rusticatur, aut abit peregre, aut redit, aut nubit, aut est, aut non est, (nam etiam mortui isti capiunt) cui non illi extemplo eudant Epicedia, Genethliaca, Protreptica, Panegyrica, Epithalamia, Vaticinia, Propemptica, Soterica, Parænetica, Nænia, Nugas." As to the success which, you say, my part has met with, it is to be attributed to what you was pleased to say of me to the world; which you do well to call your prophecy, since whatever is said in my favour, must be a prediction of things that are not yet; you, like a true godfather, engage on my part for much more than ever I can perform. My pastoral muse, like other country girls, is but put out of countenance, by what you courtiers say to her; yet I hope you would not deceive me too far, as knowing that a young scribbler's vanity needs no recruits from abroad; for Nature, like an indulgent mother, kindly takes care to supply her sons with as much of their own, as is necessary for their satisfaction. If my verses should meet with a few flying commendations, Virgil has taught me, that a young author has not much reason to be pleased with them, when he considers that the natural consequence of praise is envy and calumny.

—"Si ultra placitum laudarit, baccare frontem

"Cingite, ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro."

When once a man has appeared as a poet, he may give up his pretensions to all the rich and thriving arts: those who have once made their court to those mistresses without portions, the muses, are never like

to set up for fortunes. But for my part, I shall be satisfied if I can lose my time agreeably this way, without losing my reputation: as for gaining any, I am as indifferent in the matter as Falstaffe was, and may say of fame as he did of honour, "If it comes, it comes unlook'd for; and there's an end on't." I can be content with a bare saving game, without being thought an eminent hand (with which title Jacob has graciously dignified his adventurers and volunteers in poetry.) Jacob creates poets, as kings sometimes do knights, not for their honour, but for their money. Certainly he ought to be esteemed a worker of miracles, who is grown rich by poetry.

"What authors lose, their booksellers have won:

"So pimps grow rich, while gallants are undone."

I am your, &c.

L E T T E R XX.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

May 26, 1709.

THE last I received from you was dated the 22d of May. I take your charitable hint to me very kindly, wherein you do like a true friend, and a true Christian, and I shall endeavour to follow your advice, as well as your example.—As for your wishing to see your friend an hermit with you, I cannot be said to leave the world, since I shall enjoy in your conversation all that I can desire of it; nay, can learn more from you alone, than from my long experience of the great, or little vulgar in it.

As to the success of your poems in the late Miscellany, which I told you of in my last; upon my

word I made you no compliment, for you may be assur'd that all sort of readers like them, except they are writers too; but for them, (I must needs say), the more they like them, they ought to be the less pleased with them: so that you do not come off with a bare saving game, (as you call it), but have gained so much credit at first, that you must needs support it to the last: since you set up with so great a stock of good sense, judgment, and wit, that your judgment ensures all that your wit ventures at. The salt of your wit has been enough to give a relish to the whole insipid hotch-potch it is mingled with; and you will make Jacob's ladder raise you to immortality, by which others are turned off shamefully to their damnation, (for poetic thieves as they are), who think to be saved by others good works, how faulty soever their own are; but the coffee-house wits, or rather anti-wits the critics, prove their judgments by approving your wit; and even the newsmongers and poets will own, you have more invention than they; nay, the detractors or the envious, who never speak well of any body, (not even of those they think well of in their absence), yet will give you even in your absence their good word; and the critics only hate you, for being forced to speak well of you whether they will or no. All this is true upon the word of

Your, &c.

LETTERS TO AND

LETTER XXI.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

Aug. 11, 1709.

MY letters, so much inferior to yours, can only make up their scarcity of sense by their number of lines; which is like the Spaniards paying a debt of gold with a load of brass money. But to be a *plain-dealer*, I must tell you, I will revenge the raillery of your letters by printing them, (as Dennis did mine), without your knowledge too, which would be a revenge upon your judgment for the raillery of your wit; for some dull rogues (that is, the most in the world) might be such fools as to think what you have said of me was in earnest: it is not the first time your great wits have gained reputation by their paradoxical or ironical praises; your forefathers have done it, Erasmus and others. For all mankind who know me must confess, he must be no ordinary genius, or little friend, who can find out any thing to commend in me seriously; who have given no sign of my judgment but my opinion of yours, nor mark of my wit, but my leaving off writing to the public, now you are beginning to shew the world what you can do by yours; whose wit is as spiritual as your judgment infallible; in whose judgment I have an implicit faith, and shall always subscribe to it to save my works, in this world, from the flames and damnation.—Pray, present my most humble service to Sir William Trumbal, for whom and whose judgment I have so profound a respect, that his example had almost made me marry, more than my nephew's ill carriage to me; having once resolved

FROM MR WYCHERLEY. 63

to have revenged myself upon him by my marriage, but now am resolved to make my revenge greater upon him by his marriage.

I. E T T E R XXII.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

April 1, 1710.

I HAVE had yours of the 30th of the last month, which is kinder than I desire it should be, since it tells me you could be better pleased to be sick again in town in my company, than to be well in the country without it; and that you are more impatient to be deprived of happiness than of health. Yet, my dear friend, set raillery or compliment aside, I can bear your absence (which procures your health and ease) better than I can your company when you are in pain; for I cannot see you so, without being so too. Your love to the country I do not doubt, nor do you (I hope) my love to it or you, since there I can enjoy your company without seeing you in pain to give me satisfaction and pleasure; there I can have you without rivals or disturbers; without the too civil, or the too rude; without the noise of the loud, or the censure of the silent; and would rather have you abuse me there with the truth, than at this distance with your compliment: since now your business of a friend, and kindness to a friend, is by finding fault with his faults, and mending them by your obliging severity. I hope (in point of your good-nature) you will have no cruel charity for those papers of mine you are so willing to be troubled with; which I take most infinitely kind of you, and shall acknowledge with

gratitude, as long as I live. No friend can do more for his friend than preserving his reputation, (nay, not by preserving his life), since by preserving his life he can only make him live about threescore or fourscore years; but by preserving his reputation, he can make him live as long as the world lasts; so save him from damning, when he is gone to the devil. Therefore, I pray, condemn me in private, as the thieves do their accomplices in Newgate, to save them from condemnation by the public. Be most kindly unmerciful to my poetical faults, and do with my papers, as you country gentlemen do with your trees, slash, cut, and lop off the excrescencies and dead parts of my withered bays, that the little remainder may live the longer, and increase the value of them, by diminishing the number. I have troubled you with my papers, rather to give you pain than pleasure, notwithstanding your compliment, which says, you take the trouble kindly: such is your generosity to your friends, that you take it kindly to be desired by them to do them a kindness; and you think it done to you, when they give you an opportunity to do it them. Wherefore you may be sure to be troubled with my letters out of interest, if not kindness; since mine to you will procure yours to me; so that I write to you more for my own sake than yours; less to make you think I write well, than to learn from you to write better. Thus you see interest in my kindness, which is like the friendship of the world, rather to make a friend than be a friend; but I am yours, as a true Plain-dealer.

L E T T E R XXIII,

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

April 11, 1710.

IF I can do part of my business at Shrewsbury in a fortnight's time, (which I propose to do), I will be soon after with you, and trouble you with my company for the remainder of the summer: in the mean time, I beg you to give yourself the pains of altering, or leaving out what you think superfluous in my papers, that I may endeavour to print such a number of them as you and I shall think fit, about Michaelmas next. In order to which, (my dear friend), I beg you to be so kind to me, as to be severe to them, that the critics may be less so; for I had rather be condemned by my friend in private, than exposed to my foes in public, the critics, or common judges, who are made such by having been old offenders themselves. Pray, believe I have as much faith in your friendship and sincerity, as I have deference to your judgment; and as the best mark of a friend is telling his friend his faults in private, so the next is concealing them from the public till they are fit to appear. In the mean time, I am not a little sensible of the great kindness you do me, in the trouble you take for me, in putting my rhymes in tune, since good sounds set off often ill sense, as the Italian songs, whose good airs, with the worst words or meaning, make the best music; so by your tuning my Welch harp, my rough sense may be the less offensive to the nicer ears of those critics who deal more in sound than sense. Pray then take pity at once both of my readers and me,

in shortening my barren abundance, and increasing their patience by it, as well as the obligations I have to you: and since no madrigaller can entertain the head, unless he pleases the ear; and since the crowded operas have left the best comedies with the least audiences, 'tis a sign sound can prevail over sense; therefore soften my words, and strengthen my sense, and

“ *Eris mihi magnus Apollo.* ”

LETTER XXIV.

April 15. 1710.

I RECEIVED your most extreme kind letter but just now. It found me over those papers you mention, which have been my employment ever since Easter-Monday: I hope before Michaelmas to have discharged my task; which, upon the word of a friend, is the most pleasing one I could be put upon. Since you are so near going into Shropshire (whither I shall not care to write of this matter for fear of the miscarriage of any letters) I must desire your leave to give you a plain and sincere account of what I have found from a more serious application to them. Upon comparison with the former volume, I find much more repeated than I till now imagined, as well as in the present volume, which, if (as you told me last) you would have me dash over with a line, will deface the whole copy extremely, and to a degree that (I fear) may displease you. I have every where marked in the margins the page and line, both in this and the other part; but if you order me not to cross the lines, or would any way else limit my commission, you will oblige me by doing it in your next letter; for I am at once

equally fearful of sparing you, and of offending you by too impudent a correction. Hitherto, however, I have cross'd them so as to be legible, because you bad me. When I think all the repetitions are struck out in a copy, I sometimes find more upon dipping in the first volume, and the number encreases so much, that I believe more shortning will be requisite than you may be willing to bear with, unless you are in good earnest resolved to have no thought repeated. Pray, forgive this freedom, which as I must be sincere in this case, so I could not but take; and let me know if I am to go on at this rate, or if you would prescribe any other method.

I am very glad you continue your resolution of seeing me in my hermitage this summer; the sooner you return, the sooner I shall be happy, which indeed my want of any company that is entertaining or estimable, together with frequent infirmities and pains, hinder me from being in your absence. 'Tis (I am sure) a real truth, that my sickness cannot make me quite weary of myself when I have you with me; and I shall want no company but yours when you are here.

You see how freely and with how little care I talk rather than write to you: this is one of the many advantages of friendship, that one can say to one's friend the things that stand in need of pardon, and at the same time be sure of it. Indeed I do not know whether or no the letters of friends are the worse for being fit for none else to read. 'Tis an argument of the trust repos'd in a friend's good nature, when one writes such things to him as require a good portion of it. I have experienced yours so often and so long, that I can now no more doubt of

the greatness of it, than I hope you do of the greatness of my affection, or of the sincerity with which,

I am, &c.

LETTER XXV.

From Mr WYCHERLEY.

April 27. 1710.

YOU give me an account in your letter of the trouble you have undergone for me, in comparing my papers you took down with you, with the old printed volume, and with one another, of that bundle you have in your hands; amongst which (you say) you find numerous repetitions of the same thoughts and subjects; all which, I must confess, my want of memory has prevented me from imagining, as well as made me capable of committing; since of all figures that of Tautology is the last I would use, or least forgive myself for: but seeing is believing; wherefore I will take some pains to examine and compare those papers in your hands with one another, as well as with the former printed copies, or books of my damn'd Miscellanies; all which (as bad a memory as I have) with a little more pains and care, I think I can remedy: therefore I would not have you give yourself more trouble about them, which may prevent the pleasure you have, and may give the world in writing upon new subjects of your own, whereby you will much better entertain yourself and others. Now, as to your remarks upon the whole volume of my papers, all that I desire of you is to mark in the margin (without defacing the copy at all) either any repetition of words, matter, or sense, or any thoughts or words too much repeated;

which if you will be so kind as to do for me, you will supply my want of memory with your good one, and my deficiencies of sense, with the infallibility of yours; which if you do, you will most infinitely oblige me, who almost repent the trouble I have given you, since so much. Now as to what you call freedom with me, (which you desire me to forgive), you may be assured I would not forgive you unless you did use it; for I am so far from thinking your plainness an offence to me, that I think it a charity and an obligation; which I shall always acknowledge, with all sort of gratitude to you for it: who am, &c.

All the news I have to send you is, that poor Mr Betterton is going to make his exit from the stage of this world, the gout being gotten up into his head, and (as the physicians say) will certainly carry him off suddenly.

L E T T E R XXVI.

May 10, 1710.

I AM sorry you persist to take ill my not accepting your invitation, and to find (if I mistake not) your exception not unmix'd with some suspicion. Be certain I shall most carefully observe your request, not to cross over, or deface the copy of your papers for the future, and only to mark in the margin the repetitions: but as this can serve no further than to get rid of those repetitions, and no way rectify the method, nor connect the matter, nor improve the poetry in expression or numbers, without further blotting, adding, and altering; so it really is my opinion and desire, that you should take your papers out of my hands into your own, and that no alterations may be made but when both of us are

present; when you may be satisfied with every blot, as well as every addition, and nothing be put upon the papers but what you shall give your own sanction and assent to, at the same time.

Do not be so unjust, as to imagine from hence that I would decline any part of this task; on the contrary, you know I have been at the pains of transcribing some pieces, at once to comply with your desire of not defacing the copy, and yet to lose no time in proceeding upon the correction. I will go on the same way, if you please; though truly it is (as I have often told you) my sincere opinion that the greater part would make a much better figure as single maxims and reflections in prose, after the manner of your favourite Rochefoucault, than in verse *: and this, when nothing more is done but marking the repetitions in the margin, will be an easy task to proceed upon, notwithstanding the bad memory you complain of. I am unfeignedly, dear Sir,

Your, &c.

A. POPE.

* Mr Wycherley lived five years after, to December, 1715, but little progress was made in this design, thro' his old age, and the increase of his infirmities. However, some of the verses, which had been touch'd by Mr P. with cccviii of these Maxims in Prose, were found among his papers, which having the misfortune to fall into the hands of a Mercenary, were published in 1728, in octavo, under the title of *The Posthumous Works of William Wycherley, Esq.*

L E T T E R S

T O A N D F R O M

W. W A L S H, E s q.

From the Year 1705, to 1707.

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L E T T E R S

TO AND FROM

W. W A L S H *, E s q.

L E T T E R I.

Mr WALSH to Mr WYCHERLEY.

April 20, 1705.

I RETURN you the papers † you favour'd me with; and had sent them to you yesterday morning, but that I thought to have brought them to you last night myself. I have read them over several times with great satisfaction. The preface is very judicious and very learned; and the verses very tender and easy. The author seems to have a particular genius for that kind of poetry, and a judgment that much exceeds the years you told me he was of. He has taken very freely from the Ancients; but what he has mixed of his own with theirs, is not inferior to what he has taken from them. 'Tis no flattery at all to say, that Virgil had written nothing so good at his age ‡. I shall take it as a favour if you will bring me acquainted with him; and if he

* Of Abberley in Worcestershire, gentleman of the horse in Queen Anne's reign, author of several beautiful pieces in prose and verse, and in the opinion of Mr Dryden (in his postscript to Virgil) the best critic of our nation in his time.

† Mr Pope's Pastorals.

‡ Sixteen.

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G

will give himself the trouble any morning to call at my house, I shall be very glad to read the verses over with him, and give him my opinion of the particulars more largely than I can well do in this letter. I am, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R II.

Mr WALSH to Mr POPE.

June 24, 1706.

I RECEIVED the favour of your letter, and shall be very glad of the continuance of a correspondence by which I am like to be so great a gainer. I hope, when I have the happiness of seeing you again in London, not only to read over the verses I have now of yours, but more that you have written since; for I make no doubt but any one who writes so well, must write more. Not that I think the most voluminous poets always the best: I believe the contrary is rather true. I mentioned somewhat to you in London of a pastoral comedy, which I should be glad to hear you had thought upon since. I find Menage, in his Observations upon Tasso's Aminta, reckons up fourscore pastoral plays in Italian; and in looking over my old Italian books, I find a great many pastoral and piscatory plays, which, I suppose, Menage reckons together. I find also by Menage, that Tasso is not the first that writ in that kind, he mentioning another before him which he himself had never seen, nor indeed have I: but as the Aminta, Pastor Fido, and Filli di Sciro of Bonarelli are the three best, so, I think, there is no dispute but Aminta is the best of the three: not but that the discourses in Pastor Fido are more entertaining and co-

pious in several people's opinion, though not so proper for pastoral; and the fable of Bonarelli more surprising. I do not remember many in other languages, that have written in this kind with success. Racan's *Bergeries* are much inferior to his lyric poems; and the *Spaniards* are all too full of conceits. Rapin will have the design of pastoral plays to be taken from the *Cyclops* of Euripides. I am sure there is nothing of this kind in English worth mentioning, and therefore you have that field open to yourself. You see I write to you without any sort of constraint or method, as things come into my head, and therefore use the same freedom with me, who am, &c.

L E T T E R III.

To Mr WALSH.

* Windsor-Forest, July 2, 1706.

I CANNOT omit the first opportunity of making you my acknowledgments for reviewing those papers of mine. You have no less right to correct me, than the same hand that raised a tree has to prune it. I am convinced as well as you, that one may correct too much; for in poetry, as in painting, a man may lay colours one upon another, till they stiffen and deaden the piece. Besides, to bestow heightening on every part is monstrous: some parts ought to be lower than the rest; and nothing looks more ridiculous than a work where the thoughts, however different in their own nature, seem all on a level: 'tis like a meadow newly mown, where weeds, grass, and flowers, are all laid even, and appear undistinguished. I believe, too, that sometimes a first

thoughts are the best, as the first squeezing of the grapes makes the finest and richest wine.

I have not attempted any thing of a pastoral comedy, because, I think, the taste of our age will not relish a poem of that sort. People seek for what they call *wit*, on all subjects, and in all places; not considering that Nature loves Truth so well, that it hardly ever admits of flourishing: Conceit is to Nature, what paint is to beauty; it is not only needless, but impairs what it would improve. There is a certain majesty in simplicity, which is far above all the quaintness of wit; insomuch that the critics have excluded wit from the loftiest poetry, as well as the lowest, and forbid it to the Epic no less than the Pastoral. I should certainly displease all those who are charmed with Guarini and Bonarelli, and imitate Tasso, not only in the simplicity of his thoughts, but in that of the fable too. If surprising discoveries should have place in the story of a pastoral comedy, I believe it would be more agreeable to probability to make them the effects of chance than of design; intrigue not being very consistent with that innocence which ought to constitute a shepherd's character. There is nothing in all the *Aminta* (as I remember) but happens by mere accident; unless it be the meeting of *Aminta* with *Sylvia* at the fountain, which is the contrivance of *Daphne*; and even that is the most simple in the world: the contrary is observable in *Pastor Fido*, where *Corisca* is so perfect a mistress of intrigue, that the plot could not have been brought to pass without her. I am inclined to think the pastoral comedy has another disadvantage as to the manners; its general design is to make us in love with the innocence of a rural

life; so that to introduce shepherds of a vicious character, must in some measure debase it; and hence it may come to pass, that even the virtuous characters will not shine so much, for want of being opposed to their contraries. These thoughts are purely my own, and therefore I have reason to doubt them; but I hope your judgment will set me right.

I would beg your opinion, too, as to another point: it is, how far the liberty of borrowing may extend? I have defended it sometimes by saying, that it seems not so much the perfection of sense *, to say things that had never been said before, as to express those best that have been said ofteneft; and that writers, in the case of borrowing from others, are like trees which, of themselves, would produce only one sort of fruit, but by being grafted upon others, may yield variety. A mutual commerce makes poetry flourish; but then poets, like merchants, should repay with something of their own what they take from others; not like pirates, make prize of all they meet. I desire you to tell me sincerely, if I have not stretched this license too far in these pastorals? I hope to become a critic by your precepts, and a poet by your example. Since I have seen your eclogues, I cannot be much pleased with my own; however, you have not taken away all my vanity, so long as you give me leave to profess myself

Yours, &c.

* He should rather have said, *the perfection of conception.*

LETTER IV.

From Mr WALSH.

July 20. 1706.

I HAD sooner returned you thanks for the favour of your letter, but that I was in hopes of giving you an account at the same time of my journey to Windsor ; but I am now forced to put that quite off, being engaged to go to my corporation of Richmond in Yorkshire. I think you are perfectly in the right in your notions of Pastoral ; but I am of opinion, that the redundancy of wit you mention, though 'tis what pleases the common people, is not what ever pleases the best judges. Pastor Fido indeed has had more admirers than Aminta ; but I will venture to say, there is a great deal of difference between the admirers of one and the other. Corisca, which is a character generally admired by the ordinary judges, is intolerable in a pastoral ; and Bonarelli's fancy of making his shepherdes in love with two men equally, is not to be defended, whatever pains he has taken to do it. As for what you ask of the liberty of borrowing, 'tis very evident the best Latin poets have extended this very far ; and none so far as Virgil, who is the best of them. As for the Greek poets, if we cannot trace them so plainly, 'tis perhaps because we have none before them ; 'tis evident that most of them borrowed from Homer, and Homer has been accused of burning those that wrote before him, that his thefts might not be discovered. The best of the modern poets in all languages, are those that have the nearest copied the Ancients. Indeed in all the common subjects of

poetry, the thoughts are so obvious (at least if they are natural) that whoever writes last, must write things like what have been said before : but they may as well applaud the Ancients for the arts of eating and drinking, and accuse the Moderns of having stolen those inventions from them; it being evident in all such cases, that whoever lived first, must first find them out. 'Tis true, indeed, when

“ unus et alter

“ Affuitur pannus,”

when there are one or two bright thoughts stolen, and all the rest is quite different from it, a poem makes a very foolish figure : but when it is all melted down together, and the gold of the Ancients so mixed with that of the Moderns, that none can distinguish the one from the other, I can never find fault with it. I cannot but however own to you, that there are others of a different opinion, and that I have shewn your verses to some who have made that objection to them. I have so much company round me while I write this, and such a noise in my ears, that it is impossible I should write any thing but nonsense, so must break off abruptly. I am, Sir,

Your most affectionate,

and most humble servant.

L E T T E R V.

From Mr. WALSH.

Sept. 9, 1706.

AT my return from the North I received the favour of your letter, which had lain there till then. Having been absent about six weeks, I read over your Pastorals again, with a great deal of plea-

sure, and to judge the better read Virgil's eclogues, and Spenser's Calendar, at the same time; and I assure you, I continue the same opinion I had always of them. By the little hints you take upon all occasions to improve them, 'tis probable you will make them yet better against winter; though there is a mean to be kept even in that too, and a man may correct his verses till he takes away the true spirit of them; especially if he submits to the correction of some who pass for great critics, by mechanical rules, and never enter into the true design and genius of an author. I have seen some of these, that would hardly allow any one good ode in Horace, who cry Virgil wants fancy, and that Homer is very incorrect. While they talk at this rate, one would think them above the common rate of mortals; but generally they are great admirers of Ovid and Lucan; and when they write themselves, we find out all the mystery. They scan their verses upon their fingers; run after conceits and glaring thoughts; their poems are all made up of couplets, of which the first may be the last, or the last the first, without any sort of prejudice to their works; in which there is no design, or method, or any thing natural or just. For you are certainly in the right, that in all writings whatsoever (not poetry only) nature is to be followed; and we should be jealous of ourselves for being fond of similes, conceits, and what they call saying fine things. When we were in the North, my Lord Wharton shewed me a letter he had received from a certain great general in Spain *; I told him I would by all means have that general recalled, and set to writing here at home,

* The Earl of Peterborough.

for it was impossible that a man with so much wit as he shewed, could be fit to command an army, or do any other business †. As for what you say of expression, 'tis indeed the same thing to wit, as dress is to beauty: I have seen many women over-dressed, and several look better in a careless nightgown, with their hair about their ears, than Mademoiselle Spanheim dressed for a ball. I do not design to be in London till towards the parliament; then I shall certainly be there; and hope by that time you will have finished your Pastorals, as you would have them appear in the world, and particularly the third, of Autumn, which I have not yet seen. Your last eclogue being upon the same subject as that of mine on Mrs Tempest's death, I should take it very kindly in you to give it a little turn, as if it were to the memory of the same lady, if they were not written for some particular woman whom you would make immortal. You may take occasion to shew the difference between poets' mistresses, and other mens'. I only hint this, which you may either do, or let alone, just as you think fit. I shall be very much pleased to see you again in town, and to hear from you in the mean time. I am, with very much esteem,

Yours, &c.

† Mr Walsh's remark will be thought very innocent, when the reader is informed that it was made on the Earl of Peterborough, just before the glorious campaigns of Barcelona and Valentia.

LETTER VI.

October 22, 1706.

AFTER the thoughts I have already sent you on the subject of English versification, you desire my opinion as to some farther particulars. There are indeed certain niceties, which, though not much observed even by correct versifiers, I cannot but think deserve to be better regarded.

1. It is not enough that nothing offends the ear, but a good poet will adapt the very sounds, as well as words, to the things he treats of: so that there is (if one may express it so) a style of sound. As in describing a gliding stream, the numbers should run easy and flowing; in describing a rough torrent or deluge, sonorous and swelling; and so of the rest. This is evident every where in Homer and Virgil, and no where else, that I know of, to any observable degree. The following examples will make this plain, which I have taken from *Vida*:

“Mollē viam tacito lapsu per levīa radit.

“Incidit tardo molimine subsidendo.

“Luctantes ventos, tempestatesque sonoras.

“Immenso cum præcipitans ruit Oceano Nox.

“Telum imbellē sine ictu, conjecit.

“Tolle moras, cape faxe manu, cape robora, pastor.

“Ferte citi flammās, date tela, repellite pestem.”

This, I think, is what very few observe in practice, and is undoubtedly of wonderful force in imprinting the image on the reader: we have one excellent example of it in our language, Mr Dryden's Ode on St Cecilia's day, entitled *Alexander's Feast*.

2. Every nice ear must (I believe) have observed, that in any smooth English verse of ten syllables,

there is naturally a *pause* at the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable. It is upon these the ear rests, and upon the judicious change and management of which depends the variety of verification. For example,

At the fifth.

“Where’er thy navy | spreads her canvas wings.”

At the fourth.

“Homage to thee | and peace to all she brings.”

At the sixth.

“Like tracts of leverets | in morning snow.”

Now I fancy that, to preserve an exact harmony and variety, the pause at the fourth or sixth should not be continued above three lines together, without the interposition of another; else it will be apt to weary the ear with one continued tone, at least it does mine; that at the fifth runs quicker, and carries not quite so dead a weight, so tires not so much, though it be continued longer.

3. Another nicety is in relation to expletives, whether words or syllables, which are made use of purely to supply a vacancy. *Do*, before verbs plural, is absolutely such; and it is not improbable but future refiners may explode *did* and *does* in the same manner, which are almost always used for the sake of rhyme. The same cause has occasioned the promiscuous use of *you* and *thou* to the same person, which can never sound so graceful as either one or the other.

4. I would also object to the irruption of Alexandrine verses of twelve syllables, which, I think, should never be allowed but when some remarkable beauty or propriety in them atones for the liberty. Mr Dryden has been too free of these, especially in

his latter works. I am of the same opinion as to triple rhymes.

5. I could equally object to the repetition of the same rhymes within four or six lines of each other, as tiresome to the ear through their monotony.

6. Monosyllable lines, unless very artfully managed, are stiff, or languishing; but may be beautiful to express melancholy, slowness, or labour.

7. To come to the Hiatus, or gap between two words, which is caused by two vowels opening on each other, (upon which you desire me to be particular), I think the rule in this case is either to use the Cæsura, or admit the Hiatus, just as the ear is least shocked by either: for the Cæsura sometimes offends the ear more than the Hiatus itself, and our language is naturally overcharged with consonants: as for example, if in this verse,

“ The old have interest ever in their eye,”
we should say, to avoid the Hiatus,

“ But th’ old have int’rest.”

The Hiatus which has the worst effect, is when one word ends with the same vowel that begins the following; and next to this, those vowels whose sounds come nearest to each other, are most to be avoided. O, A, or U, will bear a more full and graceful sound than E, I, or Y. I know some people will think these observations trivial, and therefore I am glad to corroborate them by some great authorities, which I have met with in Tully and Quintilian. In the fourth book of Rhetoric to Herennius, are these words: “ Fugiemus crebras vocalium concur-
“ siones, quæ vastam atque hiantem reddunt oratio-
“ nem; ut hoc est, Baccæ æneæ amœnissimæ impen-
“ debant.” And Quintilian, l. ix. cap. 4. “ Voca-

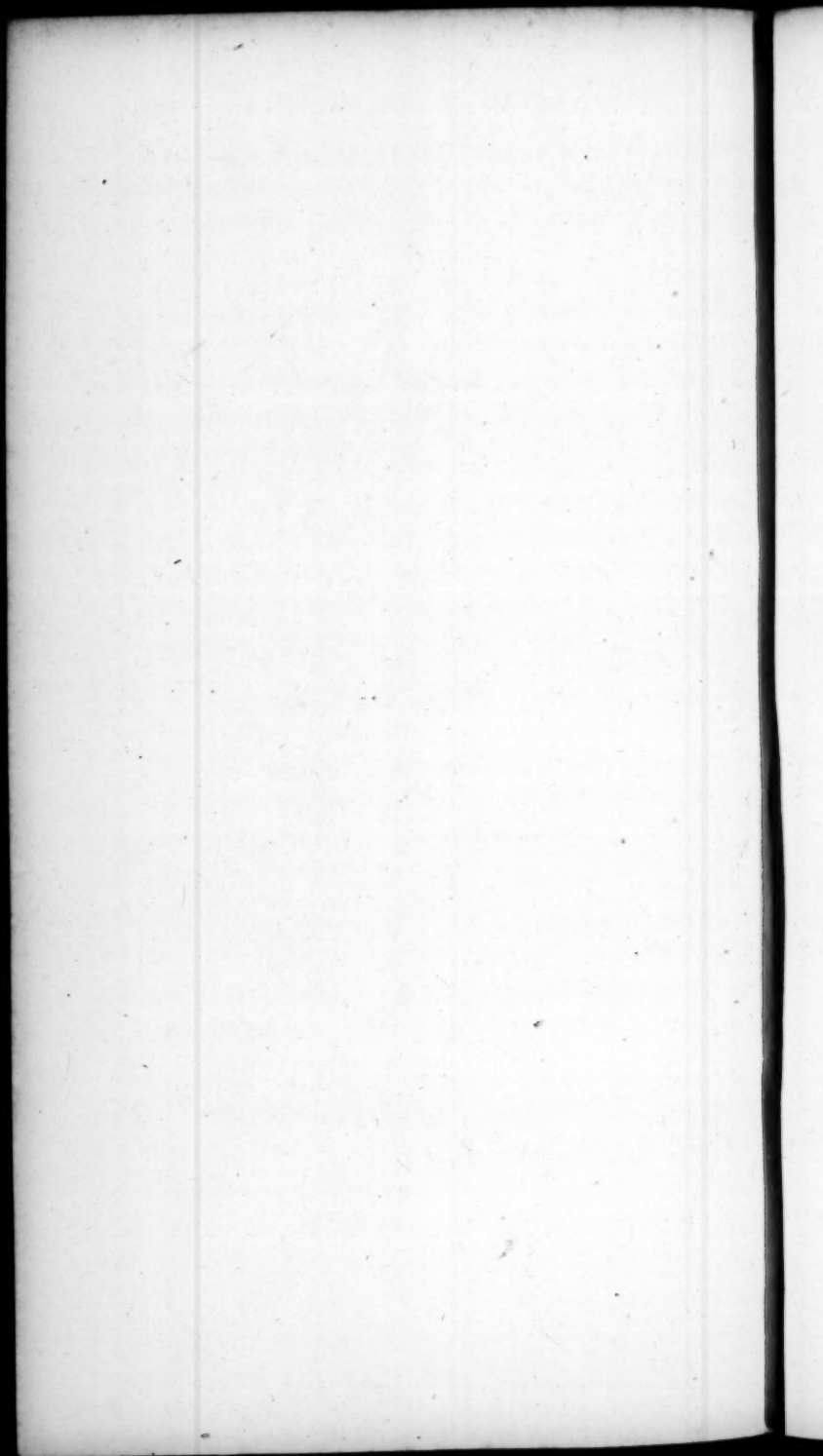
“ lium concursus cum accidit, hiat et interlisit, et
 “ quasi laborat oratio. Pessime longæ quæ easdem
 “ inter se literas committunt, sonabunt: præcipuus
 “ tamen erit hiatus earum quæ cavo aut patulo ore
 “ efferuntur. *E plenior litera est, I angustior.*”

But he goes on to reprove the excess on the other hand of being too solicitous in this matter, and says admirably, “ Nescio an negligentia in hoc, aut solitudo sit pejor.” So likewise Tully (*Orat. ad Brut.*) “ Theopompum reprehendunt, quod eas literas tanto opere fugerit, etsi idem magister ejus Socrates:” which last author, as Turnebus on Quintilian observes, has hardly one Hiatus in all his works. Quintilian tells us, that Tully and Demosthenes did not much observe this nicety, though Tully himself says in the *Orator*, “ Crebra ista vocum concurso, quam magna ex parte vitiosam, fugit Demosthenes.” If I am not mistaken, Malherbe of all the moderns has been the most scrupulous in this point; and I think Menage in his observations upon him says, he has not one in his poems. To conclude, I believe the Hiatus should be avoided with more care in poetry than in oratory; and I would constantly try to prevent it, unless where the cutting it off is more prejudicial to the sound than the Hiatus itself*.

I am, &c.

A. POPE.

* Mr Walsh died at forty-nine years of age, in the year 1708. the year before the *Essay on Criticism* was printed, which concludes with his elegy.



L E T T E R S

T O A N D F R O M

H. C R O M W E L L, E s q.

From the Year 1708, to 1711.

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L E T T E R S

TO AND FROM

H. CROMWELL, Esq.

L E T T E R I.

March 18, 1708.

I BELIEVE it was with me when I left the town, as it is with a great many men when they leave the world, whose loss itself they do not so much regret, as that of their friends whom they leave behind in it. For I do not know one thing for which I can envy London, but for your continuing there. Yet I guess you will expect me to recant this expression, when I tell you that Sappho (by which heathenish name you have christened a very orthodox lady) did not accompany me into the country. Well, you have your lady in the town still, and I have my heart in the country still, which being wholly unemployed as yet, has the more room in it for my friends, and does not want a corner at your service. You have extremely obliged me by your frankness and kindness; and if I have abus'd it by too much freedom on my part, I hope you will attribute it to the natural openness of my temper, which hardly knows how to show respect, where it feels affection. I would love my friend as my mi-

stresſs, without ceremony; and hope a little rough uſage ſometimes may not be more diſpleaſing to the one, than it is to the other.

If you have any curioſity to know in what manner I live, or rather loſe a life, Martial will inform you in one line:

“Prandeo, poto, cano, ludo, lego, cæno, quieſco.”

Every day with me is literally another yeſterday, for it is exactly the ſame: it has the ſame buſineſs, which is Poetry; and the ſame pleaſure, which is Idleneſs. A man might indeed paſs his time much better, but I queſtion if any man could paſs it much eaſier. If you will viſit our ſhades this ſpring, which I very much deſire, you may perhaps inſtruct me to manage my game more wiſely; but at preſent I am ſatiſfy'd to triſle away my time any way rather than let it ſtick by me; as ſhop-keepers are glad to be rid of thoſe goods at any rate, which would otherwiſe always be lying upon their hands.

Sir, if you will favour me ſometimes with your letters, it will be a great ſatiſfaction to me on ſeveral accounts; and on this in particular, that it will ſhew me (to my comfort) that even a wiſe man is ſometimes very idle; for ſo you needs muſt be when you can find leiſure to write to

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R I I.

April 27, 1708.

I HAVE nothing to ſay to you in this letter; but I was reſolv'd to write to tell you ſo. Why ſhould not I content myſelf with ſo many great examples, of deep Divines, profound Caſuiſts, grave Philoſophers; who have written, not letters only, but whole

FROM H. CROMWELL, Esq. 91

tomes and voluminous treatises about nothing? why should a fellow like me, who all his life does nothing, be ashamed to write nothing, and that to one who has nothing to do but to read it? But perhaps you'll say, the whole world has something to do, something to talk of, something to wish for, something to be employed about: but pray, Sir, cast up the account, put all these somethings together, and what is the sum total but just nothing? I have no more to say, but to desire you to give my service (that is nothing) to your friends, and to believe that I am nothing more than

Your, &c.

"Ex nihilo nil fit."

LUCR.

L E T T E R. III.

May 10, 1708.

YOU talk of fame and glory, and of the great men of antiquity: pray tell me, what are all your great dead men, but so many little living letters? what a vast reward is here for all the ink wasted by writers, and all the blood spilt by princes! There was in old time one Severus, a Roman Emperor. I dare say you never called him by any other name in your life: and yet in his days he was styled Lucius, Septimius, Severus, Pius, Pertinax, Augustus, Parthicus, Adiabenicus, Arabicus, Maximus, and what not? what a prodigious waste of letters has time made! what a number have here dropt off, and left the poor surviving seven unattended! For my own part, four are all I have to care for; and I'll be judged by you if any man could live in less compass. Well, for the future I'll drown all high thoughts in the Lethe of cowslip-wine; as for Fame, Renown, Reputation, take them, Critics!

"Tradam protervis in mare *Criticum*

"Ventis."

If ever I seek for immortality here, may I be damned, for there is not so much danger in a poet's being damned:

"Damnation follows death in other men,

"But your damn'd poet lives and writes agen."

LETTER IV.

Nov. 1, 1708.

I HAVE been so well satisfied with the country ever since I saw you, that I have not once thought of the town, nor enquired of any one in it besides Mr Wycherley and yourself. And from him I understand of your journey this summer into Leicestershire; from whence I guess you are returned by this time, to your old apartment in the widow's corner, to your old business of comparing critics, and reconciling commentators, and to your old diversions of losing a game at piquet with the ladies, and half a play, or quarter of a play, at the theatre: where you are none of the malicious audience, but the chief of amorous spectators; and for the infirmity of one * sense, which there, for the most part, could only serve to disgust you, enjoy the vigour of another, which ravishes you.

[† "You know when one sense is suppress'd,

"It but retires into the rest;"]

according to the poetical, not the learned, Dodwell; who has done one thing worthy of eternal memory; wrote two lines in his life that are not nonsense!] So you have the advantage of being entertained with

* His Hearing.

† Omitted by the Author in his own edition.

all the beauty of the boxes, without being troubled with any of the dulness of the stage. You are so good a critic, that 'tis the greatest happiness of the modern poets that you do not hear their works: and next, that you are not so arrant a critic, as to damn them (like the rest) without hearing. But now I talk of those critics, I have good news to tell you concerning myself, for which I expect you should congratulate with me: it is that, beyond all my expectations, and far above my demerits, I have been most mercifully reprieved by the sovereign power of Jacob Tonson, from being brought forth to public punishment, and respited from time to time from the hands of those barbarous executioners of the muses, whom I was just now speaking of. It often happens, that guilty poets, like other guilty criminals, when once they are known and proclaimed, deliver themselves into the hands of justice, only to prevent others from doing it more to their disadvantage; and not out of any ambition to spread their fame, by being executed in the face of the world, which is a fame but of short continuance. That Poet were a happy man who could but obtain a grant to preserve his for ninety-nine years; for those names very rarely last so many days, which are planted either in Jacob Tonson's, or the Ordinary of Newgate's miscellanies.

I have an hundred things to say to you, which shall be deferred till I have the happiness of seeing you in town, for the season now draws on that invites every body thither. Some of them I had communicated to you by letters before this, if I had not been uncertain where you passed your time the last season: so much fine weather, I doubt not, has given

you all the pleasure you could desire from the country, and your own thoughts the best company in it. But nothing could allure Mr Wycherley to our Forest; he continued (as you told me long since he would) an obstinate lover of the town, in spite of friendship and fair weather. Therefore henceforward, to all those considerable qualities I know you possessed of, I shall add that of prophecy. But I still believe Mr Wycherley's intentions were good, and am satisfied that he promises nothing, but with a real design to perform it : how much soever his other excellent qualities are above my imitation, his sincerity, I hope, is not; and it is with the utmost that I am,

Sir, &c.

LETTER V.

Jan. 22, 1708-9.

I HAD sent you the inclosed † papers before this time, but that I intended to have brought them myself, and afterwards could find no opportunity of sending them without suspicion of their miscarrying; not that they are of the least value, but for fear somebody might be foolish enough to imagine them so, and inquisitive enough to discover those faults which I (by your help) would correct. I therefore beg the favour of you to let them go no farther than your chamber, and to be very free of your remarks in the margins, not only in regard to the accuracy, but to the fidelity of the translation, which I have not had time to compare with its original. And

† This was a translation of the first book of Statius, done when the Author was but fourteen years old, as appears by an advertisement before the first edition of it in a miscellany published by B. Lintot, 8vo, 1711.

I desire you to be the more severe, as it is much more criminal for me to make another speak nonsense, than to do it in my own proper person. For your better help in comparing, it may be fit to tell you, that this is not an entire version of the first book. There is an omission from the 168th line—*Jam murmura serpunt plebis Angenorea*—to the 312th—*Interca patriis olim vagus exul ab oris*—(between these * two Statius has a description of the council of the Gods, and a speech of Jupiter; which contain a peculiar beauty and majesty, and were left out for no other reason, but because the consequence of this machine appears not till the second book.) The translation goes on from thence to the words, *Hic vero ambobus rabiem fortuna cruentam*, where there is an odd account of a battle at fifty-cuffs between two princes on a very slight occasion, and at a time when, one would think, the fatigue of their journey, in so tempestuous a night, might have rendered them very unfit for such a scuffle. This I had actually translated, but was very ill satisfied with it, even in my own words, to which an author cannot but be partial enough of conscience; it was therefore omitted in this copy, which goes on above eighty lines farther, at the words—*Hic primum lustrare oculis*, &c. to the end of the book.

You will find, I doubt not, that Statius was none of the discreetest poets, though he was the best versifier next Virgil: in the very beginning he unluckily betrays his ignorance in the rules of poetry (which Horace had already taught the Romans), when he asks his muse where to begin his Thebaid, and seems

* These he since translated, and they are extant in the printed version.

to doubt whether it should not be *ab ovo Ledæo*. When he comes to the scene of his poem, and the prize in dispute between the brothers, he gives us a very mean opinion of it—*Pugna est de paupere regno*.—Very different from the conduct of his master Virgil, who, at the entrance of his poem, informs his reader of the greatness of its subject.—*Tanta molis erat Romanam condere gentem*. [Bossu on Epic Poetry.] There are innumerable little faults in him, among which I cannot but take notice of one in this book, where, speaking of the implacable hatred of the brothers, he says, “The whole world would be too small
“ a prize to repay so much impiety.”

“ Quid si peteretur crimine tanto

“ Limes uterque poli, quem Sol emissus Eoo

“ Cardine, quem porta vergens prospectat Ibera ?”

This was pretty well, one would think, already ; but he goes on :

“ Quasque procul terras obliquo sydere tangit

“ Avius, aut Borea gelidas, madidive tepentes

“ Igne Noti ?”

After all this, what could a Poet think of but heaven itself for the prize ! but what follows is astonishing.

“ Quid si Tyriæ Phrigiæve sub unum

“ Convectentur opes ?”

I do not remember to have met with so great a fall in any ancient author whatsoever. I should not have insisted so much on the faults of this poet, if I did not hope you would take the same freedom with, and revenge it upon his translator. I shall be extremely glad if the reading this can be any amusement to you, the rather because I had the dissatisfaction to hear you have been confined to your

FROM H. CROMWELL, ESQ. 97

chamber by an illness, which, I fear, was as troublesome a companion as I have sometimes been in the same place; where, if ever you found any pleasure in my company, it must surely have been that which most men take in observing the faults and follies of another; a pleasure which, you see, I take care to give you even in my absence.

If you will oblige me at your leisure with the confirmation of your recovery, under your own hand, it will be extremely grateful to me; for next to the pleasure of seeing my friends, is that I take in hearing from them; and in this particular I am beyond all acknowledgments obliged to our friend Mr Wycherley. I know I need no apology to you for speaking of him, whose example, as I am proud of following in all things, so in nothing more than in professing myself, like him,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

March 7, 1709.

YOU had long before this time been troubled with a letter from me, but that I deferred it till I could send you either the * Miscellany, or my continuation of the version of Statius. The first I imagined you might have had before now, but since the contrary has happened, you may draw this moral from it, That authors in general are more ready to write nonsense, than bookfellers are to publish it. I had I know not what extraordinary flux of rhyme upon me for three days together, in which time all the

* Jacob Tonson's sixth volume of Poetical Miscellanies, in which Mr Pope's Pastorals, and some versions of Homer and Chaucer were first printed.

verses you see added, have been written; which I tell you, that you may more freely be severe upon them. 'Tis a mercy I do not assault you with a number of original Sennets and Epigrams, which our modern bards put forth in the spring-time, in as great abundance as trees do blossoms, a very few whereof ever come to be fruit, and please no longer than just in their birth. They make no less haste to bring their flowers of wit to the press, than gardeners to bring their other flowers to the market, which if they can't get off their hands in the morning, are sure to die before night. Thus the same reason that furnishes Covent-Garden with those nosegays you so delight in, supplies the Muses' Mercury and British Apollo (not to say Jacob's Miscellanies) with verses. And it is the happiness of this-age, that the modern invention of printing poems for pence a-piece, has brought the nosegays of Parnassus to bear the same price; whereby the public-spirited Mr Henry Hills of Black-friars has been the cause of great ease and singular comfort to all the learned, who never overabounding in transitory coin, should not be discontented, methinks, even though poems were distributed gratis about the streets, like Bunyan's sermons and other pious treatises, usually published in a like volume and character.

The time now drawing nigh, when you use with Sappho to cross the water in an evening to Spring-garden, I hope you will have a fair opportunity of ravishing her:—I mean only (as Old-fox in the Plain Dealer says) through the ear, with your well-penn'd verses. I wish you all the pleasure which the season and the nymph can afford; the best company, the best coffee, and the best news you can desire:

and what more to wish you than this, I do not know; unless it be a great deal of patience to read and examine the verses I send you: I promise you in return a great deal of deference to your judgment, and an extraordinary obedience to your sentiments for the future, to which, you know, I have been sometimes a little refractory. If you will please to begin where you left off last, and mark the margin, as you have done in the pages immediately before, (which you will find corrected to your sense since your last perusal), you will extremely oblige me, and improve my translation. Besides those places which may deviate from the sense of the author, it would be very kind in you to observe any deficiencies in the diction or numbers. The hiatus in particular I would avoid as much as possible, to which you are certainly in the right to be a professed enemy: though, I confess, I could not think it possible at all times to be avoided by any writer, till I found, by reading Malherbe lately, that there is scarce any throughout his poems. I thought your observation true enough to be passed into a rule, but not a rule without exceptions, nor that it ever had been reduced to practice; but this example of one of the most correct and best of their poets has undeceived me, and confirms your opinion very strongly, and much more than Mr Dryden's authority, who, though he made it a rule, seldom observed it.

Yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

June 10, 1709.

I HAVE received part of the version of Statius, and return you my thanks for your remarks, which I think to be just, except where you cry out, (like one in Horace's Art of Poetry), *Pulchre, bene, recte!* There I have some fears you are often, if not always in the wrong.

One of your objections, namely, on that passage, "The rest revolving years shall ripen into fate," may be well grounded, in relation to its not being the exact sense of the words—*Certo reliqua ordine ducam* *. But the duration of the action of Statius's poem may as well be excepted against, as many things besides in him, (which I wonder Bossu has not observed): for instead of confining his narration to *one year*, it is manifestly exceeded in the very first two books: the narration begins with Oedipus's prayer to the Fury to promote discord betwixt his sons; afterward the poet expressly describes their entering into the agreement of reigning a year by turns; and Polynices takes his flight from Thebes on his brother's refusal to resign the throne. All this is in the first book; in the next, Tydeus is sent ambassador to Eteocles, and demands his resignation in these terms:

"Astriferum velox jam circulus orbem

"Torfit, et amissæ redierunt montibus umbræ,

"Ex quo frater inops, ignota per oppida tristes

"Exul agit casus."

But Bossu himself is mistaken in one particular, relating to the commencement of the action; saying, in

* See the first book of Statius, v. 302.

book ii. chap. 8. that Statius opens it with Europa's rape, whereas the poet at most only deliberates whether he should or not ;

" Unde jubetis

" Ire, Deæ? gentisne canam primordia diræ,

" Sidonios raptus?" &c.

but then expressly passes all this with a *longa retro series*—and says

" Limes mihi carminis esto

" Oedipodæ confusa domus."

Indeed there are numberless particulars blame-worthy in our Author, which I have tried to soften in the version :

" Dubiamque jugo fragor impulit Oeten

" In latus, et geminis vix fluctibus obstitit Isthmus,"

is most extravagantly hyperbobbical: nor did I ever read a greater piece of tautology than

" Vacua cum solus in aula

" Respiceres jus omne tuum, cunctosque minores,

" Et nusquam par stare caput."

In the journey of Polynices is some geographical error :

" In mediis audit duo littora campis,"

could hardly be; for the isthmus of Corinth is full

five miles over : and " caligantes abrupto sole My-

" cenas," is not consistent with what he tells us, in

lib. iv. line 305. " That those of Mycenæ came not

" to the war at this time, because they were then

" in confusion by the divisions of the brothers, Atreus

" and Thyestus." Now, from the raising the Greek

army against Thebes, back to the time of this jour-

ney of Polynices, is (according to Statius's own account) three years.

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

July 17, 1709.

THE morning after I parted from you, I found myself, as I had prophesied, all alone, in an uneasy stage-coach; a doleful change from that agreeable company I enjoyed the night before! without the least hope of entertainment but from my last recourse in such cases—a book. I then began to enter into acquaintance with your moralists, and had just received from them some cold consolation for the inconveniencies of this life, and the uncertainty of human affairs, when I perceived my vehicle to stop, and heard from the side of it the dreadful news of a sick woman preparing to enter it. 'Tis not easy to guess at my mortification; but being so well fortified with philosophy, I stood resigned with a stoical constancy to endure the worst of evils, a sick woman. I was, indeed, a little comforted to find, by her voice and dress, that she was young and a gentlewoman; but no sooner was her hood removed, but I saw one of the finest faces I ever beheld, and, to encrease my surprise, heard her salute me by my name. I never had more reason to accuse Nature for making me short-sighted than now, when I could not recollect I had ever seen those fair eyes which knew me so well, and was utterly at a loss how to address myself; till with a great deal of simplicity and innocence she let me know (even before I discovered my ignorance) that she was the daughter of one in our neighbourhood, lately married, who having been consulting her physicians in town, was returning into the country, to try what good air and a husband could do to recover her. My father, you must know, has sometimes

recommended the study of physick to me, but I never had any ambition to be a doctor till this instant. I ventured to prescribe some fruit, (which I happened to have in the coach), which being forbidden her by her doctor, she had the more inclination to. In short, I tempted, and she ate; nor was I more like the devil than she like Eve. Having the good success of the foresaid tempter before my eyes, I put on the gallantry of the old serpent, and, in spite of my evil form, accosted her with all the gaiety I was master of; which had so good an effect, that in less than an hour she grew pleasant; her colour returned, and she was pleased to say my prescription had wrought an immediate cure: in a word, I had the pleasantest journey imaginable.

Thus far, methinks, my letter has something of the air of a romance, though it be true: but I hope you will look on what follows as the greatest of truths, that I think myself extremely obliged by you in all points; especially for your kind and honourable information and advice in a matter of the utmost concern to me, which I shall ever acknowledge as the highest proof at once of your friendship, justice and sincerity. At the same time be assured, that gentleman we spoke of shall never, by any alteration in me, discover my knowledge of his mistake; the hearty forgiving of which is the only kind of return I can possibly make him for so many favours: and I may derive this pleasure at least from it, that whereas I must otherwise have been a little uneasy to know my incapacity of returning his obligations, I may now, by bearing his frailty, exercise my gratitude and friendship more than himself either is, or perhaps ever will be sensible of.

" Ille meos, primus qui me sibi junxit, amores

" Abstulit; ille habeat secum, fervetque sepulchro!"

But in one thing, I must confess, you have yourself obliged me more than any man, which is, that you have shewed me many of my faults, to which as you are the more an implacable enemy, by so much the more are you a kind friend to me. I could be proud, in revenge, to find a few slips in your verses, which I read in London, and since in the country, with more application and pleasure: the thoughts are very just, and you are sure not to let them suffer by the versification. If you would oblige me with the trust of any thing of yours, I should be glad to execute any commissions you would give me concerning them. I am here so perfectly at leisure, that nothing would be so agreeable an entertainment to me; but if you will not afford me that, do not deny me at least the satisfaction of your letters as long as we are absent, if you would not have him very unhappy, who is very sincerely.

Yours, &c.

Having a vacant space here, I will fill it with a short ode on Solitude, which I found yesterday by great accident, and which, I find by the date, was written when I was not twelve years old; that you may perceive how long I have continued in my passion for a rural life, and in the same employments of it.

Happy the man, whose wish and care

A few paternal acres bound,

Content to breathe his native air

In his own ground;

FROM H. CROMWELL, Esq. 103

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Bless'd, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,
Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mix'd; sweet recreation,
And innocence which most does please,
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus, unlamented, let me die,
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I ly.

L E T T E R IX.

Aug. 19, 1709.

I F I were to write to you as often as I think of you, my letters would be as bad as a rent-charge; but tho' the one be but too little for your good-nature, the other would be too much for your quiet, which is one blessing good nature should indispenfibly receive from mankind, in return for those many it gives. I have been inform'd of late, how much I am indebted to that quality of yours, in speaking well of me in my absence; the only thing by which you prove yourself no wit nor critic; tho' indeed I have often thought, that a friend will show just as much indulgence (and no more) to my faults when I am absent, as he does severity to 'em when I am present. To be very frank with you, Sir, I must

own, that where I receiv'd so much civility at first, I could hardly have expected so much sincerity afterwards. But now I have only to wish, that the last were but equal to the first, and that as you have omitted nothing to oblige me, so you would omit nothing to improve me.

I caus'd an acquaintance of mine to enquire twice of your welfare, by whom I have been inform'd; that you have left your speculative angle in the Widow's Coffeehouse, and bidding adieu for some time to all the Rehearsals, Reviews, Gazettes, &c. have march'd off into Lincolnshire. Thus I find you vary your life in the scene at least, tho' not in the action; for tho' life for the most part, like an old play, be still the same, yet now and then a new scene may make it more entertaining. As for myself, I would not have my life a very regular play; let it be * a good merry farce, a G-d's name, and a fig for the critical unities! For the generality of men, a true modern life is like a true modern play, neither tragedy, comedy, nor farce, nor one, nor all of these; every actor is much better known by his having the same face, than by keeping the same character: for we change our minds as often as they can their parts, and he who was yesterday Cæsar, is to-day Sir John Daw. So that one might ask the same question of a modern life, that Rich did of a modern play; "Pray do me the favour, Sir, to inform me; is this your Tragedy or your Comedy?"

I have dwelt the longer upon this, because I persuade myself it might be useful, at a time when we have no theatre, to divert ourselves at this great one.

* *Tolerable farce*, in the Author's own Edit. a *God's name* omitted there.

Here is a glorious standing comedy of Fools, at which every man is heartily merry, and thinks himself an unconcern'd spectator. This (to our singular comfort) neither my Lord Chamberlain, nor the Queen herself can ever shut up, or silence.—* While that of Drury (alas!) lyes desolate, in the profoundest peace: and the melancholy prospect of the nymphs yet lingering about its beloved avenues, appears no less moving than that of the Trojan dames lamenting over their ruined Ilium! What now can they hope, dispossest'd of their ancient seats, but to serve as captives to the insulting victors of the Hay-market? The afflicted subjects of France do not, in our Postman, so grievously deplore the obstinacy of their arbitrary monarch, as these perishing people of Drury, the obdurate heart of that Pharaoh, Rich, who, like him, disdains all proposals of peace and accommodation. Several libels have been secretly affixed to the great gates of his imperial palace in Bridges-street; and a memorial, representing the distresses of these persons, has been accidentally dropt (as we are credibly informed by a person of quality) out of his first minister the chief box-keeper's pocket, at a late conference of the said person of quality and others, on the part of the Confederates, and his Theatrical Majesty on his own part. Of this you may expect a copy, as soon as it shall be transmitted to us from a good hand. As for the late Congress, it is here reported, that it has not been wholly ineffectual; but this wants confirmation; yet we cannot but hope the concurring prayers and tears of so

* What follows, to the end of this Letter, is omitted in the Author's own Edition.

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many wretched ladies may induce this haughty prince to reason.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X.

Oct. 19, 1709.

I MAY truly say I am more obliged to you this summer than to any of my acquaintance; for had it not been for the two kind letters you sent me, I had been perfectly "oblitusque meorum, obliviscendus et illis." The only companions I had were those Muses of whom Tully says, "Adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium præbent, delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur:" which is indeed as much as ever I expected from them: for the Muses, if you take them as companions, are very pleasant and agreeable; but whoever should be forced to live or depend upon 'em, would find himself in a very bad condition. That quiet, which Cowley calls the *Companion of Obscurity*, was not wanting to me, unless it was interrupted by those fears you so justly guess I had for our friend's welfare. 'Tis extremely kind in you to tell me the news you heard of him, and you have deliver'd me from more anxiety than he imagines me capable of on his account, as I am convinced by his long silence. However, the love of some things rewards itself, as of virtue, and of Mr Wycherley. I am surpris'd at the danger, you tell me, he has been in, and must agree with you, that our nation would have lost in him as much wit and probity as would have remain'd (for ought I know) in the rest of it. My concern for his friendship will excuse me (since I

know you honour him so much, and since you know I love him above all men) if I vent a part of my uneasiness to you, and tell you that there has not been wanting one to insinuate malicious untruths of me to Mr Wycherley, which, I fear, may have had some effect upon him. If so, he will have a greater punishment for his credulity than I could wish him, in that fellow's acquaintance. The loss of a faithful creature is something, though of ever so contemptible an one; and if I were to change my dog for such a man as the aforesaid, I should think my dog undervalued; (who follows me about as constantly here in the country, as I was used to do Mr Wycherley in the town.)

Now I talk of my dog, that I may not treat of a worse subject, which my spleen tempts me to, I will give you some account of him; a thing not wholly unprecedented, since Montaigne (to whom I am but a dog in comparison) has done the same thing of his cat. "Dic mihi quid melius desidiosus agam? You are to know then, that as 'tis likeness begets affection, so my favourite dog is a little one, a lean one, and none of the finest shap'd. He is not much a spaniel in his fawning, but has (what might be worth any man's while to imitate him in) a dumb surly sort of kindness, that rather shews itself when he thinks me ill us'd by others, than when we walk quietly and peaceably by ourselves. If it be the chief point of friendship to comply with a friend's motions and inclinations, he possesses this in an eminent degree: he lyes down when I sit, and walks when I walk, which is more than many good friends can pretend to; witness our walk a year ago in St James's Park.—Histories are more full of examples of the fidelity of

dogs than of friends, but I will not insist upon many of them, because it is possible some may be almost as fabulous as those of Pylades and Orestes, &c. I will only say for the honour of dogs, that the two most ancient and estimable books, sacred and profane, extant (*viz.* the Scripture and Homer) have shewn a particular regard to these animals. That of Toby is the more remarkable, because there seem'd no manner of reason to take notice of the dog, besides the great humanity of the author. Homer's account of Ulysses's dog Argus, is the most pathetic imaginable, all the circumstances considered, and an excellent proof of the old bard's good-nature. Ulysses had left him at Ithaca when he embarked for Troy, and found him at his return after twenty years (which by the way is not unnatural, as some critics have said, since I remember the dam of my dog was twenty-two years old when she died: May the omen of longevity prove fortunate to her successors.) You shall have it in verse.

A R G U S.

When wise Ulysses, from his native coast
Long kept by wars, and long by tempests tost,
Arriv'd at last, poor, old, disguis'd, alone,
To all his friends, and ev'n his queen unknown;
Chang'd as he was, with age, and toils, and cares,
Furrow'd his rev'rend face, and white his hairs,
In his own palace forc'd to ask his bread,
Scorn'd by those slaves his former bounty fed,
Forgot of all his own domestic crew,
The faithful dog alone his rightful master knew!
Unfed, unhous'd, neglected, on the clay,
Like an old servant now cashier'd, he lay;
Touch'd with resentment of ungrateful man,
And longing to behold his antient Lord again.

Him when he saw—he rose, and crawl'd to meet,
 ('Twas all he could) and fawn'd, and kiss'd his feet,
 Seiz'd with dumb joy—then falling by his side,
 Own'd his returning Lord, look'd up, and died!

Plutarch, relating how the Athenians were obliged to abandon Athens in the time of Themistocles, steps back again out of the way of his history, purely to describe the lamentable cries and howlings of the poor dogs they left behind. He makes mention of one, that follow'd his master across the sea to Salamis, where he died, and was honoured with a tomb by the Athenians, who gave the name of the Dog's Grave to that part of the island where he was buried. This respect to a dog in the most polite people of the world, is very observable. A modern instance of gratitude to a dog (though we have but few such) is, that the chief order of Denmark (now injuriously called *The order of the Elephant*) was instituted in memory of the fidelity of a dog named *Wild-brat*, to one of their kings who had been deserted by his subjects; he gave his order this motto, or to this effect (which still remains) *Wild-brat was faithful*. Sir William Trumball has told me a story * which he heard from one that was present: King Charles I. being with some of his court during his troubles, a discourse arose what sort of dogs deserved pre-eminence; and it being on all hands agreed to belong either to the spaniel or greyhound, the king gave his opinion on the part of the greyhound, because (said he) it has all the good-nature of the other without the fawning. A good piece of satire upon his courtiers, with which I will conclude my dis-

* Sir Philip Warwick tells this story in his Memoirs.

course of dogs. Call me a Cynic, or what you please, in revenge for all this impertinence, I will be contented; provided you will but believe me, when I say a bold word for a Christian, that, of all dogs, you will find none more faithful than

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X I.

April 10, 1710.

I HAD written to you sooner, but that I made some scruple of sending profane things to you in holy week. Besides, our family would have been scandalized to see me write, who take it for granted I write nothing but ungodly verses. I assure you I am looked upon in the neighbourhood for a very well disposed person; no great hunter indeed, but a great admirer of the noble sport, and only unhappy in my want of constitution for that, and drinking. They all say 'tis pity I am so sickly, and I think 'tis pity they are so healthy: but I say nothing that may destroy their good opinion of me: I have not quoted one Latin author since I came down, but have learned without book a song of Mr Thomas Durfey's, who is your only poet of tolerable reputation in this country. He makes all the merriment in our entertainments, and but for him, there would be so miserable a dearth of catches, that, I fear, they would put either the parson or me upon making some for them. Any man, of any quality, is heartily welcome to the best toping table of our gentry, who can roar out some rhapsodies of his works: so that in the same manner as it was said of Homer to his detractors; What! dares any man speak against him who has given so many men to eat?

(meaning the rhapsodists who lived by repeating his verses) thus may it be said of Mr Durfey to his detractors; dares any one despise him, who has made so many men *drink*? Alas, Sir! this is a glory which neither you nor I must ever pretend to. Neither you with your Ovid, nor I with my Statius, can amuse a board of justices and extraordinary 'squires, or gain one hum of approbation, or laugh of admiration. These things (they would say) are too studious, they may do well enough with such as love reading, but give us your ancient poet Mr Durfey. 'Tis mortifying enough, it must be confessed; but however, let us proceed in the way that Nature has directed us—*Multi multa sciunt, sed nemo omnia*, as it is said in the almanac. Let us communicate our works for our mutual comfort: send me elegies, and you shall not want heroics. At present, I have only these arguments in prose to the Thebaid, which you claim by promise, as I do your translation of *Pars me Sulmo tenet*, — and the *Ring*; the rest I hope for as soon as you can conveniently transcribe them, and whatsoever orders you are pleased to give me shall be punctually obeyed by

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

May 10, 1710.

I HAD not so long omitted to express my acknowledgments to you for so much good-nature and friendship as you lately showed me; but that I am but just returned to my own hermitage, from Mr C***'s, who has done me so many favours, that I am almost inclined to think my friends infect one another, and that your conversation with him has made

him as obliging to me as yourself. I can assure you he has a sincere respect for you, and this, I believe, he has partly contracted from me, who am too full of you not to overflow upon those I converse with. But I must now be contented to converse only with the dead of this world, that is to say, the dull and obscure, every way obscure, in their intellects as well as their persons; or else have recourse to the living dead, the old authors with whom you are so well acquainted, even from Virgil down to Aulus Gellius, whom I do not think a critic by any means to be compared to Mr Dennis: and I must declare positively to you, that I will persist in this opinion, till you become a little more civil to Atticus. Who could have imagined that he, who had escaped all the misfortunes of his time, unhurt even by the proscriptions of Antony and Augustus, should in these days find an enemy more severe and barbarous than those tyrants? and that enemy the gentlest too, the best natured of mortals, Mr Cromwell, whom I must in this compare once more to Augustus; who seemed not more unlike himself, in the severity of one part of his life and the clemency of the other, than you. I leave you to reflect on this, and hope that time (which mollifies rocks, and of stiff things makes limber) will turn a resolute critic to a gentle reader; and instead of this positive, tremendous new-fashioned Mr Cromwell, restore unto us our old acquaintance, the soft, beneficent, and courteous Mr Cromwell.

I expect much, towards the civilizing of you in your critical capacity, from the innocent air and tranquillity of our Forest, when you do me the favour to visit it. In the mean time, it would do well

by way of preparative, if you would duly and constantly every morning read over a pastoral of Theocritus or Virgil; and let the Lady Isabella put your Macrobius and Aulus Gellius somewhere out of your way, for a month or so. Who knows but travelling, and long airing in an open field, may contribute more successfully to the cooling a critic's severity, than it did to the assuaging of Mr Cheek's anger of old? In these fields you will be secure of finding no enemy, but the most faithful and affectionate of your friends, &c.

L E T T E R XIII.

May 17, 1710.

AFTER I had recovered from a dangerous illness which was first contracted in town, about a fortnight after my coming hither I troubled you with a letter, and * paper inclosed, which you had been so obliging as to desire a sight of when last I saw you, promising me in return some translations of yours from Ovid. Since when, I have not had a syllable from your hands, so that 'tis to be feared that though I have escaped death, I have not oblivion. I should at least have expected you to have finished that elegy upon me, which you told me you was upon the point of beginning when I was sick in London; if you will but do so much for me first, I will give you leave to forget me afterwards; and for my own part will die at discretion, and at my leisure. But I fear I must be forced, like many learned authors, to write my own epitaph, if I would be

* Verses on Silence, in imitation of the Earl of Rochester's poem on Nothing; done at fourteen years old.

remembered at all. Monsieur de la Fontaine's would fit me to a hair; but it is a kind of sacrilege (do you think it is not?) to steal epitaphs. In my present, living dead condition, nothing would be properer than *Oblitusque meorum, obliviscendum et illis*, but that unluckily I can't forget my friends, and the civilities I received from yourself, and some others. They say indeed 'tis one quality of generous minds to forget the obligations they have conferred, and perhaps too it may be so to forget those on whom they conferred them: then indeed I must be forgotten to all intents and purposes! I am, it must be owned, dead in a natural capacity, according to Mr Bickerstaff; dead in a poetical capacity, as a damned author; and dead in a civil capacity, as a useless member of the commonwealth. But reflect, dear Sir, what melancholy effects may ensue, if dead men are not civil to one another! if he who has nothing to do himself, will not comfort and support another in his idleness: if those who are to die themselves, will not now and then pay the charity of visiting a tomb and a dead friend, and strowing a few flowers over him. In the shades where I am, the inhabitants have a mutual compassion for each other; being all alike *Inanes*; we saunter to one another's habitations, and daily assist each other in doing nothing at all. This I mention for your edification and example, that, all-alive as you are, you may not sometimes disdain—*desipere in loco*. Though you are no Papist, and have not so much regard to the dead as to address yourself to them, (which I plainly perceive by your silence), yet I hope you are not one of those heterodox who hold them to be totally insensible of the good offices and kind wishes of their

living friends, and to be in a dull state of sleep, without one dream of those they left behind them. If you are, let this letter convince you to the contrary, which assures you I am still, though in a state of separation, Your, &c.

P. S. This letter of deaths puts me in mind of poor Mr Betterton's; over whom I would have this sentence of Tully for an epitaph, which will serve him as well in his Moral, as his Theatrical capacity:

"*Vitæ bene actæ jucundissima est recordatio.*"

L E T T E R XIV.

June 24, 1710.

TIS very natural for a young friend, and a young lover, to think the persons they love have nothing to do but to please them; when perhaps they, for their parts, had twenty other engagements before. This was my case, when I wondered I did not hear from you; but I no sooner received your short letter, but I forgot your long silence: and so many fine things as you said of me could not but have wrought a cure on my own sickness, if it had not been of the nature of that which is deaf to the voice of the charmer. 'Twas impossible you could have better timed your compliment on my philosophy; it was certainly properest to commend me for it just when I most needed it, and when I could least be proud of it; that is, when I was in pain. 'Tis not easy to express what an exaltation it gave to my spirits, above all the cordials of my doctor; and 'tis no compliment to tell you, that your compliments were sweeter than the sweetest of his juleps and syrups. But if you will not believe so much,

“ Pour le moins, votre compliment

“ M’a soulagé dans ce moment ;

“ Et dès qu’on me l’est venu faire

“ J’ai chassé mon apoticaire,

“ Et renvoyé mon lavement.”

Nevertheless I would not have you entirely lay aside the thoughts of my epitaph, any more than I do those of the probability of my becoming (ere long) the subject of one. For death has of late been very familiar with some of my size. I am told my Lord Lumley and Mr Litton are gone before me; and though I may now, without vanity, esteem myself the least thing like a man in England, yet I can’t but be sorry two heroes of such a make should die inglorious in their beds; when it had been a fate more worthy our size, had they met with theirs from an irruption of cranes, or other warlike animals, those ancient enemies to our Pygmæan ancestors! You of a superior species little regard what befalls us *homunciones sesquipedales*; however, you have no reason to be so unconcerned, since all physicians agree there is no greater sign of a plague among men, than a mortality among frogs. I was the other day in company with a lady, who rallied my person so much, as to cause a total subversion of my countenance: some days after, to be revenged on her, I presented her, among other company, the following Rondeau on that occasion, which I desire you to show Sappho.

You know where you did despise

(T’ other day) my little eyes,

Little legs, and little thighs,

And some things of little size,

You know where.

You, 'tis true, have fine black eyes,
Taper legs, and tempting thighs,
Yet what more than all we prize
Is a thing of little size,

You know where.

This sort of writing, called the Rondeau, is what I never knew practised in our nation, and, I verily believe, it was not in use with the Greeks or Romans, neither Macrobius nor Hyginus taking the least notice of it. 'Tis to be observed, that the vulgar spelling and pronouncing it round O, is a manifest corruption, and by no means to be allowed of by critics. Some may mistakenly imagine that it was a sort of Rondeau which the Gallic soldiers sung in Cæsar's triumph over Gaul—*Gallias Cæsar subegit*, &c. as it is recorded by Suetonius in Julio, and so derive its original from the ancient Gauls to the modern French; but this is erroneous; the words there not being ranged according to the laws of the Rondeau, as laid down by Clement Marot. If you will say, that the song of the soldiers might be only the rude beginning of this kind of poem, and so consequently imperfect, neither Heinſius nor I can be of that opinion; and so I conclude, that we know nothing of the matter.

But, Sir, I ask your pardon for all this buffoonery, which I could not address to any one so well as to you, since I have found by experience, that you most easily forgive my impertinencies. 'Tis only to show you that I am mindful of you at all times; that I write at all times; and as nothing I can say can be worth your reading, so I may as well throw out what comes uppermost, as study to be dull. I am, &c.

LETTER XV.

From Mr CROMWELL.

July 15, 1710.

AT last I have prevailed over a lazy humour to transcribe this elegy: I have changed the situation of some of the Latin verses, and made some interpolations, but I hope they are not absurd, and foreign to my author's sense and manner; but they are referred to your censure, as a debt; whom I esteem no less a critic than a poet: I expect to be treated with the same rigour as I have practised to Mr Dryden and you.

"Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim."

I desire the favour of your opinion, why Priam, in his speech to Pyrrhus in the second *Æneid*, says this to him,

"At non ille, satum quo te mentiris, *Achilles*."

He would intimate (I fancy by Pyrrhus's answer) only his degeneracy: but then these following lines of the version (I suppose from Homer's history) seem absurd in the mouth of Priam, *viz.*

"He chear'd my sorrows, and for fums of gold

"The bloodless carcase of my *Hector* fold."

I am

Your, &c.

LETTER XVI.

I GIVE you thanks for the version you sent me of Ovid's elegy: it is very much an image of that author's writing, who has an agreeableness that charms us without correctness, like a mistress, whose faults we see, but love her with them all. You have

very judiciously altered his method in some places, and I can find nothing which I dare insist upon as an error; what I have written in the margins being merely guesses at a little improvement, rather than criticisms. I assure you I do not expect you should subscribe to my private notions, but when you shall judge them agreeable to reason and good sense. What I have done is not as a critic, but as a friend: I know too well how many qualities are requisite to make the one, and that I want almost all I can reckon up; but I am sure I do not want inclination, nor, I hope, capacity to be the other. Nor shall I take it at all amiss that another differs from my opinion: 'tis no more than I have often done from my own; and indeed, the more a man advances in understanding, he becomes the more every day a critic upon himself, and finds something or other still to blame in his former notions and opinions. I could be glad to know if you have translated the 11th elegy of lib. ii. *Ad amicam navigantem*; the 8th of book iii. or the 11th of book iii. which are above all others my particular favourites, especially the last of these.

As to the passage of which you ask my opinion in the second *Æneid*, it is either so plain as to require no solution, or else (which is very probable) you see farther into it than I can. Priam would say, that "Achilles (whom surely you only feign to be your father, since your actions are so different from his) did not use me thus inhumanely. He blushed at his murder of Hector, when he saw my sorrows for him; and restored his dead body to me to be buried." To this the answer of Pyrrhus seems to be agreeable enough, "Go then to the shades, and tell Achilles how I degenerate from

“him:” granting the truth of what Priam had said of the difference between them. Indeed Mr Dryden’s mentioning here what Virgil more judiciously passes in silence, the circumstance of Achilles’s selling *for money* the body of Hector, seems not so proper; it in some measure lessening the character of Achilles’s generosity and piety, which is the very point of which Priam endeavours in this place to convince his son, and to reproach him with the want of. But the truth of this circumstance is no way to be questioned, being expressly taken from Homer, who represents Achilles weeping for Priam, yet receiving the gold, Iliad xxiv. For when he gives the body, he uses these words; “O my friend Patroclus! “forgive me that I quit the corpse of him who “killed thee; I have great gifts in ransom for it, “which I will bestow upon thy funeral.”

I am, &c.

LETTER XVII.

From Mr CROMWELL.

Aug. 5, 1710.

LOOKING among some French rhymes, I was agreeably surprized to find in the Rondeau of * *Pour le moins*—your Apoticaire and Lavement, which I took for your own; so much is your Muse of intelligence with the wits of all languages. You have refin’d upon Voiture, whose *Où vous savez* is much inferior to your *You know where*—You do not only pay your club with your author (as our friend says) but the whole reckoning, who can form such pretty lines from so trivial a hint.

* In Voiture’s Poems,

For my † Elegy; 'tis confessed, that the topography of Sulmo in Latin makes but an awkward figure in the version. Your couplet of the dog-star is very fine, but may be too sublime in this place. I laughed heartily at your note upon paradise; for to make Ovid talk of the garden of Eden, is certainly most absurd; but Xenophon in his Oeconomics, speaking of a garden finely planted and watered (as is here described) calls it *paradisos*: 'tis an interpolation indeed, and serves for a gradation to the celestial orb; which expresses in some sort the *fidus castoris in parte cali*.—How trees can enjoy, let the naturalists determine; but the poets make them sensitive, lovers, bachelors, and married. Virgil in his Georgics, lib. ii. Horace Ode xv. lib. ii. “*Plantanus cœlebs evincet ulmos.*” Epod. ii. “*Ergo aut adulta vitium propagine altos maritat populos.*” Your critique is a very *decepcante*; for after the many faults you justly find, you smooth your rigour: but an obliging thing is owing (you think) to one who so much esteems and admires you, and who shall ever be

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XVIII.

August 21, 1710.

YOUR Letters are a perfect charity to a man in retirement, utterly forgotten of all his friends but you; for since Mr Wycherley left London, I have not heard a word from him, though just before, and once since, I writ to him, and though I know myself guilty of no offence but of doing sincerely just what he * bid me—*Hoc mihi libertas, hoc pia lingua dedit!*—

† Ovid's Amorum, l. ii. el. 16. Pars me Sulmo, &c.

* Correcting his verses. See the letters in 1706, and the following years, of Mr Wycherley and Mr Pope.

But the greatest injury he does me is the keeping me in ignorance of his welfare, which I am always very solicitous for, and very uneasy in the fear of any indisposition that may befall him. In what I sent you some time ago, you have not verse enough to be severe upon, in revenge for my last criticism. In one point I must persist, that is to say, my dislike of your Paradise, in which I take no pleasure: I know very well that in Greek 'tis not only used by Xenophon, but is a common word for any garden; but in English it bears the signification and conveys the idea of Eden, which alone is (I think) a reason against making Ovid use it; who will be thought to talk too much like a Christian in your version at least, whatever it might have been in Latin or Greek. As for all the rest of my remarks, since you do not laugh at them as at this, I can be so civil as not to lay any stress upon them (as I think I told you before); and in particular in the point of *trees enjoying*, you have, I must own, fully satisfied me that the expression is not only defensible, but beautiful. I shall be very glad to see your translation of the elegy, *Ad amicam navigantem*, as soon as you can; for (without a compliment to you) every thing you write either in verse or prose is welcome to me; and you may be confident, (if my opinion can be of any sort of consequence in any thing) that I will never be unsincere, though I may be often mistaken. To use sincerity with you is but paying you in your own coin, from whom I have experienced so much of it; and I need not tell you, how much I really esteem you, when I esteem nothing in the world so much as that quality. I know you sometimes say civil things to me in your epistolary style, but those I am to make allowance for,

as particularly when you talk of *admiring*; 'tis a word you are so used to in conversation of Ladies, that it will creep into your discourse, in spite of you, even to your friends. But as women, when they think themselves secure of admiration, commit a thousand negligences, which show them so much at disadvantage and off their guard, as to lose the little real love they had before; so when men imagine others entertain some esteem for their abilities, they often expose all their imperfections and foolish works, to the disparagement of the little wit they were thought masters of. I am going to exemplify this to you, in putting into your hands (being encouraged by so much indulgence) some verses of my youth, or rather childhood; which (as I was a great admirer of Waller) were intended in imitation of his manner*; and are, perhaps, such imitations, as those you see in awkward country dames, of the fine and well-bred ladies of the court. If you will take them with you into Lincolnshire, they may save you one hour from the conversation of the country gentlemen and their tenants (who differ but in dress and name), which, if it be there as bad as here, is even worse than my poetry. I hope your stay there will be no longer than (as Mr Wycherley calls it) to rob the country, and run away to London with your money. In the mean time I beg the favour of a line from you, and am (as I will never cease to be)

Your, &c.

* One or two of these were since printed among other imitations done in his youth.

L E T T E R X I X .

Oct. 12, 1710.

I DEFERRED answering your last, upon the advice I received, that you were leaving the town for some time, and expected your return with impatience, having then a design of seeing my friends there, among the first of which I have reason to account yourself. But my almost continual illnesses prevent that, as well as most other satisfactions of my life: however, I may say one good thing of sickness, that it is the best cure in nature for ambition, and designs upon the world or fortune: it makes a man pretty indifferent for the future, provided he can but be easy, by intervals, for the present. He will be content to compound for his quiet only, and leave all the circumstantial part and pomp of life to those who have a health vigorous enough to enjoy all the mistresses of their desires. I thank God, there is nothing out of myself which I would be at the trouble of seeking, except a friend; a happiness I once hoped to have possessed in Mr Wycherley; but—*Quantum mutatus ab illo!*—I have for some years been employed much like children that build houses with cards, endeavouring very busily and eagerly to raise a friendship, which the first breath of any ill-natured by-stander could puff away.—But I will trouble you no farther with writing, nor myself with thinking of this subject.

I was mightily pleased to perceive by your quotation from Voiture, that you had tracked me so far as France. You see 'tis with weak heads as with weak stomachs, they immediately throw out what they received last; and what they read, floats upon the

surface of the mind, like oil upon water, without incorporating. This, I think, however, can't be said of the love-verses I last troubled you with, where all (I am afraid) is so puerile and so like the author, that no body will suspect any thing to be borrowed. Yet you (as a friend, entertaining a better opinion of them) it seems, searched in Waller, but searched in vain. Your judgment of them is, I think, very right,—for it was my own opinion before. If you think 'em not worth the trouble of correcting, pray tell me so freely, and it will save me a labour; if you think the contrary, you would particularly oblige me by your remarks on the several thoughts as they occur. I long to be nibbling at your verses, and have not forgot who promised me Ovid's elegy *Ad amicam navigantem*. Had Ovid been as long composing it, as you in sending it, the lady might have sailed to Gades, and received it at her return. I have really a great itch of criticism upon me, but want matter here in the country; which I desire you to furnish me with, as I do you in the town:

“Sic servat studii fœdera quisque sui.”

I am obliged to Mr Caryl (whom, you tell me, you met at Epsom) for telling you truth, as a man is in these days to any one that will tell truth to his advantage; and I think none is more to mine, than what he told you, and I should be glad to tell all the world, that I have an extreme affection and esteem for you.

“Tecum etenim longos memini consumere soles,

“Et tecum primas epulis decerpere noctes;

“Unum opus et requiem pariter disponimus ambo,

“Atque verecunda laxamus seria mensa.”

By these *Epulae*, as I take it, Persius meant the

Portugal snuff and burnt claret, which he took with his master Cornutus; and the *verecunda mensa* was, without dispute, some coffeehouse table of the ancients.—I will only observe, that these four lines are as elegant and musical as any in Persius, not excepting those six or seven which Mr Dryden quotes as the only such in all that author. I could be heartily glad to repeat the satisfaction described in them, being truly

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XX.

Oct. 28, 1710.

I AM glad to find by your last letter that you write to me with the freedom of a friend, setting down your thoughts as they occur, and dealing plainly with me in the matter of my own trifles, which, I assure you, I never valued half so much as I do that sincerity in you which they were the occasion of discovering to me; and which while I am happy in, I may be trusted with that dangerous weapon, poetry, since I shall do nothing with it but after asking and following your advice. I value sincerity the more, as I find, by sad experience, the practice of it is more dangerous; writers rarely pardoning the executioners of their verses, even though themselves pronounce sentence upon them.—As to Mr Philips's Pastorals, I take the first to be infinitely the best, and the second the worst; the third is for the greatest part a translation from Virgil's *Daphnis*. I will not forestal your judgment of the rest, only observe in that of the Nightingale these lines (speaking of the musician's playing on the harp):

" Now lightly skimming o'er the strings they pass,
 " Like wings that gently brush the plying grass,
 " And melting airs arise at their command;
 " And now, laborious, with a weighty hand,
 " He sinks into the cords, with solemn pace,
 " And gives the swelling tones a manly grace."

To which nothing can be objected, but that they are too lofty for pastoral, especially being put into the mouth of a shepherd, as they are here; in the poet's own person they had been, I believe, more proper. They are more after Virgil's manner than that of Theocritus, whom yet, in the character of pastoral, he rather seems to imitate. In the whole, I agree with the Tatler, that we have no better eclogues in our language. There is a small copy of the same author published in the Tatler, N^o. 12. on the Danish winter: 'tis poetical painting, and I recommend it to your perusal.

Dr Garth's poem I have not seen, but believe I shall be of that critic's opinion you mention at Will's, who swore it was good; for, though I am very cautious of swearing after critics, yet I think one may do it more safely when they commend, than when they blame.

I agree with you in your censure of the use of sea-terms in Mr Dryden's Virgil; not only because Helenus was no great prophet in those matters, but because no terms of art or cant words suit with the majesty and dignity of style which Epic poetry requires—*Cui mens divini^{or} atque os magna sonaturum.*—The Tarpawlin phrase can please none but such *qui aurum habent Batavam*; they must not expect *auribus Atticis probari*, I find by you. (I think I have brought in two phrases of Martial here very dexterously.)

Though you say you did not rightly take my meaning in the verse I quoted from Juvenal, yet I will not explain it; because, though it seems you are resolved to take me for a critic, I would by no means be thought a commentator.——And for another reason too, because I have quite forgot both the verse and the application.

I hope it will be no offence to give my most hearty service to Mr Wycherley, though I perceive by his last to me, I am not to trouble him with my letters, since he there told me he was going instantly out of town, and till his return was my servant, &c. I guess by yours he is yet with you, and beg you to do what you may with all truth and honour, that is, assure him I have ever borne all the respect and kindness imaginable to him. I do not know to this hour what it is that has estranged him from me; but this I know, that he may for the future be more safely my friend, since no invitation of his shall ever more make me so free with him. I could not have thought any man so very cautious and suspicious, as not to credit his own experience of a friend. Indeed, to believe no body may be a maxim of safety, but not so much of honesty. There is but one way I know of conversing safely with all men, that is, not by concealing what we say or do, but by saying or doing nothing that deserves to be concealed; and I can truly boast this comfort in my affairs with Mr Wycherley. But I pardon his jealousy, which is become his nature, and shall never be his enemy, whatsoever he says of me.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XXI.

From Mr CROMWELL.

November 5, 1710.

I FIND I am obliged to the sight of your love-verses, for your opinion of my sincerity; which had been never called in question, if you had not forced me, upon so many other occasions, to express my esteem.

I have just read and compared * Mr Rowe's version of the 9th of Lucan, with very great pleasure, where I find none of those absurdities so frequent in that of Virgil, except in two places, for the sake of lashing the priests; one where Cato says—*Sortilegis egeant dubii*—and one in the simile of the hæmorrhoids—*fatidici Sabæi*.—He is so arrant a Whig, that he strains even beyond his author, in passion for liberty and aversion to tyranny; and errs only in amplification. *Lucan ix. in initio*, describing the seat of the *Semidei manes*, says,

“ Quodque patet terras inter lunæque meatus,

“ *Semidei manes habitant.*”

Mr Rowe has this line,

“ Then looking down on the sun's feeble ray.”

Pray your opinion, if there be an error-sphæricus in this or no?

Your, &c.

* Pieces printed in the sixth vol. of Tonson's Miscellany.

LETTER XXII.

November 11, 1710.

YOU mistake me very much in thinking the freedom you kindly used with my love-verses gave me the first opinion of your sincerity: I assure you it only did what every good-natured action of yours has done since, confirm'd me more in that opinion. The fable of the nightingale in Philips's pastoral, is taken from Famianus Strada's Latin poem on the same subject, in his *Prolusiones Academicæ*; only the tomb he erects at the end, is added from Virgil's conclusion of the *Culex*. I cannot forbear giving you a passage out of the Latin poem I mention, by which you will find the English poet is indebted to it.

" Alternat mira arte fides: dum torquet acutas,

" Inciditque, graves operoso verbere pulsat.

" Jamque manu per fila volat; simul hos, simul illos

" Explorat numeros, chordaque laborat in omni.

" Mox filet. Illa modis totidem respondet, et artem

" Arte refert. Nunc ceu rudis, aut incerta canendi

" Præbet iter liquidem labenti e pectore voci,

" Nunc cæsim variat, modulisque canora minutis

" Delibrat vocem, tremuloque reciprocatur ore."

This poem was many years since imitated by Craslow, out of whose verses the following are very remarkable:

" From this to that, from that to this he flies,

" Feels Music's pulse in all its arteries;

" Caught in a net which there Apollo preads,

" His fingers struggle with the vocal threads."

I have (as I think I formerly told you) a very good opinion of Mr Rowe's 9th book of Lucan: indeed he amplifies too much, as well as Brebœuf, the

famous French imitator. If I remember right, he sometimes takes the whole comment into the text of the version, as particularly in line 808. "Utque
"solet pariter totis se effundere signis Corycii pres-
"sura croci."—And in the place you quote, he makes of those two lines in the Latin,

"Vidit quanta sub nocte jaceret

"Nostra dies, risitque sui ludibria trunci,"

no less than eight in English.

What you observe, sure, cannot be an error-sphæ-
ricus, strictly speaking, either according to the Ptole-
maic, or our Copernican system; Tycho Brahe him-
self will be on the translator's side. For Mr Rowe
here says no more, than that he look'd down on the
rays of the sun, which Pompey might do, even tho'
the body of the sun were above him.

You can't but have remarked what a journey Lu-
can here makes Cato take for the sake of his fine de-
scriptions. From Cyrene he travels by land, for no
better reason than this,

"Hæc eadem suadebat hiems, quæ clauserat æquor."

The winter's effects on the sea, it seems, were more
to be dreaded than all the serpents, whirlwinds,
sands, &c. by land, which immediately after he
paints out in his speech to the soldiers; then he fet-
ches a compass a vast way round about, to the Nasa-
mones and Jupiter Ammon's temple, purely to ridi-
cule the oracles: and Labienus must pardon me, if I
do not believe him when he says—*sors obtulit, et for-
tuna via*—either Labienus or the map is very much
mistaken here. Thence he returns back to the Syrtes
(which he might have taken first in his way to Utica)
and so to Leptis Minor, where our author leaves

him; who seems to have made Cato speak his own mind, when he tells his army—*Ire sat est*—no matter whither. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

From Mr CROMWELL.

November 20, 1710.

THE system of Tycho Brahe (were it true, as it is novel) could have no room here: Lucan, with the rest of the Latin poets, seems to follow Plato, whose order of the spheres is clear in Cicero *De natura Deorum*, *De somnio Scipionis*, and in Macrobius. The seat of the *Semidei manes* is Platonic too; for Apuleius *De deo Socratis* assigns the same to the genii, viz. the region of the air for their intercourse with gods and men; so that, I fancy, Rowe mistook the situation, and I cannot be reconciled to, *Look down on the sun's rays*. I am glad you agree with me about the latitude he takes; and wish you had told me if the *sortilegi*, and *fatidici*, could license his invective against priests; but, I suppose, you think them (with Helena) undeserving of your protection. I agree with you in Lucan's errors, and the cause of them, his poetic descriptions; for the Romans then knew the coast of Africa from Cyrene (to the south-east of which lyes Ammon toward Egypt) to Leptis and Utica: but, pray, remember how your Homer nodded while Ulysses slept, and waking knew not where he was, in the short passage from Coreyra to Ithaca. I like Trapp's versions for their justness; his psalm is excellent, the prodigies in the first Georgic judicious (whence I conclude that 'tis easier to

turn Virgil justly into blank verse than rhyme.) The eclogue of Gallus, and fable of Phaeton pretty well; but he is very faulty in his numbers; the fate of Phaeton might run thus.

“ The blasted *Phaeton* with blazing hair,
 “ Shot gliding thro’ the vast abyfs of air,
 “ And tumbled headlong, like a falling star.

I am,

Your, &c.

LETTER XXIV:

Nov. 24, 1710.

TO make use of that freedom and familiarity of style which we have taken up in our correspondence, and which is more properly talking upon paper than writing; I will tell you without any preface, that I never took Tycho Brahe for one of the Ancients, or in the least an acquaintance of Lucan’s; nay, ’tis a mercy, on this occasion, that I do not give you an account of his life and conversation; as how he lived some years like an enchanted knight in a certain island, with a tale of a King of Denmark’s mistress that shall be nameless—But I have compassion on you, and would not for the world you should stay any longer among the Genii and Semidei Manes, you know where; for if once you get so near the moon, Sappho will want your presence in the clouds and inferior regions; not to mention the great loss Drury-Lane will sustain when Mr C—— is in the milky way. These celestial thoughts put me in mind of the priests you mention, who are a sort of Sortilegi in one sense, because in their lottery there are more blanks than prizes; the adventurers being at best in an uncertainty, where-

as the setters up are sure of something. Priests indeed in their character, as they represent God, are sacred; and so are constables, as they represent the King: but you will own a great many of them are very odd fellows, and the devil of any likeness in them. Yet I can assure you, I honour the good as much as I detest the bad, and I think, that in condemning these, we praise those. The translations from Ovid I have not so good an opinion of as you; because I think they have little of the main characteristic of this author, a graceful easiness. For let the sense be ever so exactly rendered, unless an author looks like himself, in his air, habit and manner, 'tis a disguise, and not a translation. But as to the psalm, I think David is much more beholden to the translator than Ovid; and as he treated the Roman like a Jew, so he has made the Jew speak like a Roman.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XXV.

From Mr CROMWELL.

Dec. 5, 1710.

THE same judgment we made on Rowe's ixth of Lucan, will serve for his part of the vith, where I find this memorable line,

"Parque novum fortuna videt concurrere, bellum

"Atque virum."

For this he employs six verses, among which is this,

"As if on knightly terms in lists they ran."

Pray can you trace chivalry up higher than Pharamond? will you allow it an anachronism?—Tickel in his version of the Phoenix from Claudian,

"When nature ceases, thou shalt still remain,"

"Nor second chaos bound thy endless reign."

Claudian thus,

"Et clades te nulla rapit, solusque superstes,

"Edomita tellure, manes."

Which plainly refers to the deluge of Deucalion and the conflagration of Phaeton, not to the final dissolution. Your thought of the priests lottery is very fine: you play the wit, and not the critic, upon the errors of your brother.

Your observations are all very just: Virgil is eminent for adjusting his diction to his sentiments; and, among the moderns, I find you practise the prosodia of your rules. Your poem * shews you to be, what you say of Voiture,—*with books well-bred*: the state of the fair, though satirical, is touched with that delicacy and gallantry, that not the court of Augustus, not—But hold, I shall lose what I lately recovered, your opinion of my sincerity: yet I must say, 'tis as faultless as the fair to whom it is addressed, be she never so perfect. The M. G. (who, it seems, had no right notion of you, as you of him) transcribed it by lucubration: from some discourse of yours, he thought your inclination led you to (what the men of fashion call learning) pedantry: but now he says he has no less, I assure you, than a veneration for you.

Your, &c.

* To a Lady, with the Works of Voiture.

LETTER XXVI.

Dec. 17, 1710.

IT seems that my late mention of Crashaw, and my quotation from him, has moved your curiosity : I therefore send you the whole author, who has held a place among my other books of this nature for some years ; in which time having read him twice or thrice, I find him one of those whose works may just deserve a reading. I take this poet to have writ like a gentleman, that is, at leisure hours, and more to keep out of idleness, than to establish a reputation : so that nothing regular or just can be expected from him. All that regards design, form, fable, (which is the soul of poetry), all that concerns exactness, or consent of parts (which is the body), will probably be wanting ; only pretty conceptions, fine metaphors, glittering expressions, and something of a neat cast of verse (which are properly the dress, gems, or loose ornaments of poetry) may be found in these verses. This is indeed the case of most other poetical writers of miscellanies ; nor can it well be otherways, since no man can be a true poet, who writes for diversion only. These authors should be considered as versifiers and witty men, rather than as poets ; and under this head will only fall the thoughts, the expression, and the numbers. These are only the pleasing part of poetry, which may be judged of at a view, and comprehended all at once. And (to express myself like a painter) their colouring entertains the sight, but the lines and life of the picture are not to be inspected too narrowly.

~~This~~ This author formed himself upon Petrarch, or 12

ther upon Marino. His thoughts, one may observe, in the main, are pretty; but oftentimes far-fetched, and too often strained and stiffened to make them appear the greater: for men are never so apt to think a thing great, as when it is odd or wonderful; and inconsiderate authors would rather be admired than understood. This ambition of surprising a reader, is the true natural cause of all fustian, or bombast in poetry. To confirm what I have said, you need but look into his first poem of the Weeper, where the 2d, 4th, 6th, 14th, 21st stanzas are as sublimely dull, as the 7th, 8th, 9th, 16th, 17th, 20th, and 23d stanzas of the same copy, are soft and pleasing; and if these last want any thing, it is an easier and more unaffected expression. The remaining thoughts in that poem might have been spared, being either but repetitions, or very trivial and mean. And by this example in the first, one may guess at all the rest; to be like this, a mixture of tender, gentle thoughts, and suitable expressions, of forced and inextricable conceits, and of needless fillers up to the rest. From all which it is plain, this author writ fast, and set down what came uppermost. A reader may skim off the froth, and use the clear underneath; but if he goes too deep will meet with a mouthful of dregs; either the top or bottom of him are good for little, but what he did in his own natural midway is the best.

To speak of his numbers is a little difficult, they are so various and irregular, and mostly Pindaric. 'Tis evident his heroic verse (the best example of which is his Music's Duel) is carelessly made up; but one may imagine from what it now is, that, had he taken more care, it had been musical and pleasing

enough, not extremely majestic, but sweet : and the time considered of his writing, he was (even as uncorrect as he is) none of the worst versificators.

I will just observe, that the best pieces of this author are, a Paraphrase on Psal. xxiii. On Lessius, Epitaph on Mr Ashton, Wishes to his supposed Mistress, and the *Dies Ira*.

L E T T E R XXVII.

Dec. 30, 1710.

I RESUME my old liberty of throwing out myself upon paper to you, and making what thoughts float uppermost in my head, the subject of a letter. They are at present upon laughter, which (for ought I know) may be the cause you might sometimes think me too remiss a friend, when I was most entirely so: for I am never so inclined to mirth as when I am most pleased and most easy, which is in the company of a friend like yourself.

As the fooling and toying with a mistress is a proof of fondness, not disrespect, so is raillery with a friend. I know there are prudes in friendship, who expect distance, awe, and adoration, but I know you are not of them; and I for my part am no Idol-worshipper, though a Papist. If I were to address Jupiter himself in a heathen way, I fancy I should be apt to take hold of his knee, in a familiar manner, if not of his beard like Dionysius; I was just a going to say of his buttons; but I think Jupiter wore none (however, I won't be positive to so nice a critic as you but his robe might be subneeted with a Fibula.) I know some philosophers define laughter, *A recommending ourselves to our own favour, by comparison with the weakness of another*: but I am sure I very rarely laugh with

that view, nor do I believe children have any such consideration in their heads, when they express their pleasure this way: I laugh full as innocently as they for the most part, and as sillily. There is a difference too betwixt laughing *about* a thing, and laughing *at* a thing: one may find the inferior man (to make a kind of casuistical distinction) provoked to folly at the sight or observation of some *circumstance at a thing*, when the *thing itself* appears solemn and august to the superior man, that is, our judgment and reason. Let an ambassador speak the best sense in the world, and deport himself in the most graceful manner before a Prince, yet if the tail of his shirt happen (as I have known it happen to a very wise man) to hang out behind, more people will laugh at that than attend to the other; till they recollect themselves, and then they will not have a jot the less respect for the minister. I must confess the iniquity of my countenance before you; several muscles of my face sometimes take an impertinent liberty with my judgment; but then my judgment soon rises, and sets all right again about my mouth: and I find I value no man so much as him in whose sight I have been playing the fool. I cannot be *sub persona* before a man I love; and not to laugh with honesty, when nature prompts, or folly (which is more a second nature than any thing I know), is but a knavish hypocritical way of making a mask of one's own face.—To conclude, those that are my friends I *laugh with*, and those that are not I *laugh at*; so am merry in company, and if ever I am wise, it is all by myself. You take just another course; and to those that are not your friends, are very civil; and to those that are, very endearing and complaisant: thus when you and I meet, there will be the

rifus et blanditia united together in conversation, as they commonly are in a verse. But without laughter on the one side, or compliment on the other, I assure you I am, with real esteem,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

From Mr CROMWELL.

Oft. 26, 1711.

MR WYCHERLEY visited me at Bath in my sickness, and expressed much affection to me: hearing from me how welcome his letters would be, he presently writ to you; in which I inserted my scrawl, and after, a second. He went to Gloucester in his way to Salop, but was disappointed of a boat, and so returned to the Bath; then he shewed me your answer to his letters, in which you speak of my good nature; but, I fear, you found me very forward at reading; yet you allow for my illness. I could not possibly be in the same house with Mr Wycherley, though I sought it earnestly; nor come up to town with him, he being engaged with others; but whenever we met, he talked of you. He praises your poem *, and even outvies me in kind expressions of you. As if he had not wrote two letters to you, he was for writing every post; I put him in mind he had already. Forgive me this wrong. I know not whether my talking so much of your great humanity and tenderness to me, and love to him; or whether the return of his natural disposition to you, was the cause; but certainly you are now highly in his favour: now he will come this winter to your house, and I must go with him; but first he will

* Essay on Criticism.

invite you speedily to town.—I arrived on Saturday last much wearied, yet had wrote sooner, but was told by Mr Gay, (who has writ a pretty poem to Lintot, and who gives you his service), that you was gone from home. Lewis shewed me your letter, which set me right, and your next letter is impatiently expected from me. Mr Wycherley came to town on Sunday last, and kindly surpris'd me with a visit on Monday morning. We dined and drank together; and I saying, *To our Loves*, he replied, *'Tis Mr Pope's health*: he said he would go to Mr Thorold's and leave a letter for you. Though I cannot answer for the event of all this, in respect to him, yet I can assure you that, when you please to come, you will be most desirable to me, as always by inclination, so now by duty, who shall ever be

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XXIX.

Nov. 12, 1711.

I RECEIVED the entertainment of your letter the day after I had sent you one of mine, and I am but this morning returned hither. The news you tell me of the many difficulties you found in your return from Bath, gives me such a kind of pleasure as we usually take in accompanying our friends in their mixed adventures; for, methinks, I see you labouring through all your inconveniencies of the rough roads, the hard saddle, the trotting horse, and what not? What an agreeable surprise would it have been to me, to have met you by pure accident, (which I was within an ace of doing), and to have carried you off triumphantly, set you on an easier pad, and relieved the wandering knight with a night's

lodging and rural repast, at our castle on the Forest! But these are only the pleasing imaginations of a disappointed lover, who must suffer in a melancholy absence yet these two months. In the mean time, I take up with the Muses for want of your better company; the Muses, *quæ nobiscum pernoctant, peregrinantur, rusticantur*. Those ærial ladies just discover enough to me of their beauties to urge my pursuit, and draw me on in a wandering maze of thought, still in hopes (and only in hopes) of attaining those favours from them, which they confer on their more happy admirers. We grasp some more beautiful idea in our own brain, than our endeavours to express it can set to the view of others; and still do but labour to fall short of our first imagination. The gay colouring which fancy gave at the first transient glance we had of it, goes off in the execution: like those various figures in the gilded clouds, which while we gaze long upon, to separate the parts of each imaginary image, the whole faints before the eye, and decays into confusion.

I am highly pleased with the knowledge you give me of Mr Wycherley's present temper, which seems so favourable to me. I shall ever have such a fund of affection for him as to be agreeable to myself when I am so to him, and cannot but be gay when he is in good humour; as the surface of the earth (if you will pardon a poetical similitude) is clearer or gloomier, just as the sun is brighter or more overcast.—I should be glad to see the verses to Lintot which you mention, for, methinks, something oddly agreeable may be produced from that subject.—For what remains, I am so well, that nothing but the assurance of your being so, can make me better;

and if you would have me live with any satisfaction these dark days in which I cannot see you, it must be by your writing sometimes to

Your, &c.

LETTER XXX.

From Mr CROMWELL.

Dec. 7, 1717.

MR WYCHERLEY has, I believe, sent you two or three letters of invitation; but you, like the fair, will be long solicited before you yield, to make the favour the more acceptable to the lover. He is much yours by his talk: for that unbounded genius which has ranged at large like a libertine, now seems confined to you; and I should take him for your mistress too, by your simile of the sun and earth: 'tis very fine, but inverted by the application; for the gaiety of your fancy, and the drooping of his by the withdrawing of your lustre, persuades me it would be juster by the reverse. Oh happy favourite of the muses! how, *pernoctare* all night long with them? but alas! you do but toy, but skirmish with them, and decline a close engagement. Leave elegy and translation to the inferior class, on whom the Muses only glance now and then like our winter-sun, and then leave them in the dark. Think on the dignity of tragedy, which is of the greater poetry, as Dennis says, and foil him at his other weapon, as you have done in criticism. Every one wonders that a genius like yours will not support the sinking drama; and Mr Wilks (though, I think, his talent is comedy) has expressed a furious ambi-

tion to swell in your buskins. We have had a poor comedy of Johnson's (not Ben) which held seven nights, and has got him three hundred pounds, for the town is sharp set on new plays. In vain would I fire you by interest or ambition, when your mind is not susceptible of either; though your authority (arising from the general esteem, like that of Pompey) must infallibly assure you of success; for which in all your wishes you will be attended with those of
Your, &c.

L E T T E R XXXI.

Dec. 21, 1711.

IF I have not writ to you so soon as I ought, let my writing now atone for the delay; as it will infallibly do, when you know what a sacrifice I make you at this time, and that every moment my eyes are employed upon this paper, they are taken off from two of the finest faces in the universe. But indeed 'tis some consolation to me to reflect, that while I but write this period, I escape some hundred fatal darts from those unerring eyes, and about a thousand deaths or better. Now you, that delight in dying, would not once have dreamt of an absent friend in these circumstances: you that are so nice an admirer of beauty, or (as a critic would say after Terence) *so elegant a spectator of forms*; you must have a sober dish of coffee, and a solitary candle at your side, to write an epistle lucubratory to your friend; whereas I can do it as well with two pair of radiant lights, that outshine the golden god of day, and silver goddesses of night, and all the refulgent eyes of the firmament.—You fancy now that Sappho's eyes

are two of these my tapers, but it is no such matter; these are eyes that have more persuasion in one glance than all Sappho's oratory and gesture together, let her put her body into what moving postures she pleases. Indeed, indeed, my friend, you could never have found so improper a time to tempt me with interest or ambition: let me but have the reputation of these in my keeping, and as for my own, let the devil, or let Dennis, take it for ever. How gladly would I give all I am worth, that is to say, my pastorals, for one of them, and my essay for the other? I would lay out all my poetry in love; an original for a lady, and a translation for a waiting-maid! Alas! what have I to do with Jane Gray, as long as Miss Molly, Miss Betty, or Miss Patty are in this world? Shall I write of beauties murdered long ago, when there are those at this instant that murder me? I'll even compose my own tragedy, and the poet shall appear in his own person to move compassion: 'twill be far more effectual than Bays's entering with a rope about his neck; and the world will own, there never was a more miserable object brought upon the stage.

Now, you that are a critic, pray inform me, in what manner I may connect the foregoing part of this letter with that which is to follow, according to the rules? I would willingly return Mr Gay my thanks for the favour of his poem, and in particular for his kind mention of me; I hoped, when I heard a new comedy had met with success upon the stage, that it had been his, to which I really wish no less; and (had it been any way in my power) should have been very glad to have contributed to its introduc-

tion into the world. His verses to * Lintot have put a whim into my head, which you are like to be troubled with in the opposite page : take it as you find it, the production of half an hour t'other morning. I design very soon to put a task of a more serious nature upon you, in reviewing a piece of mine that may better deserve criticism ; and by that time you have done with it, I hope to tell you in person with how much fidelity I am

Your, &c.

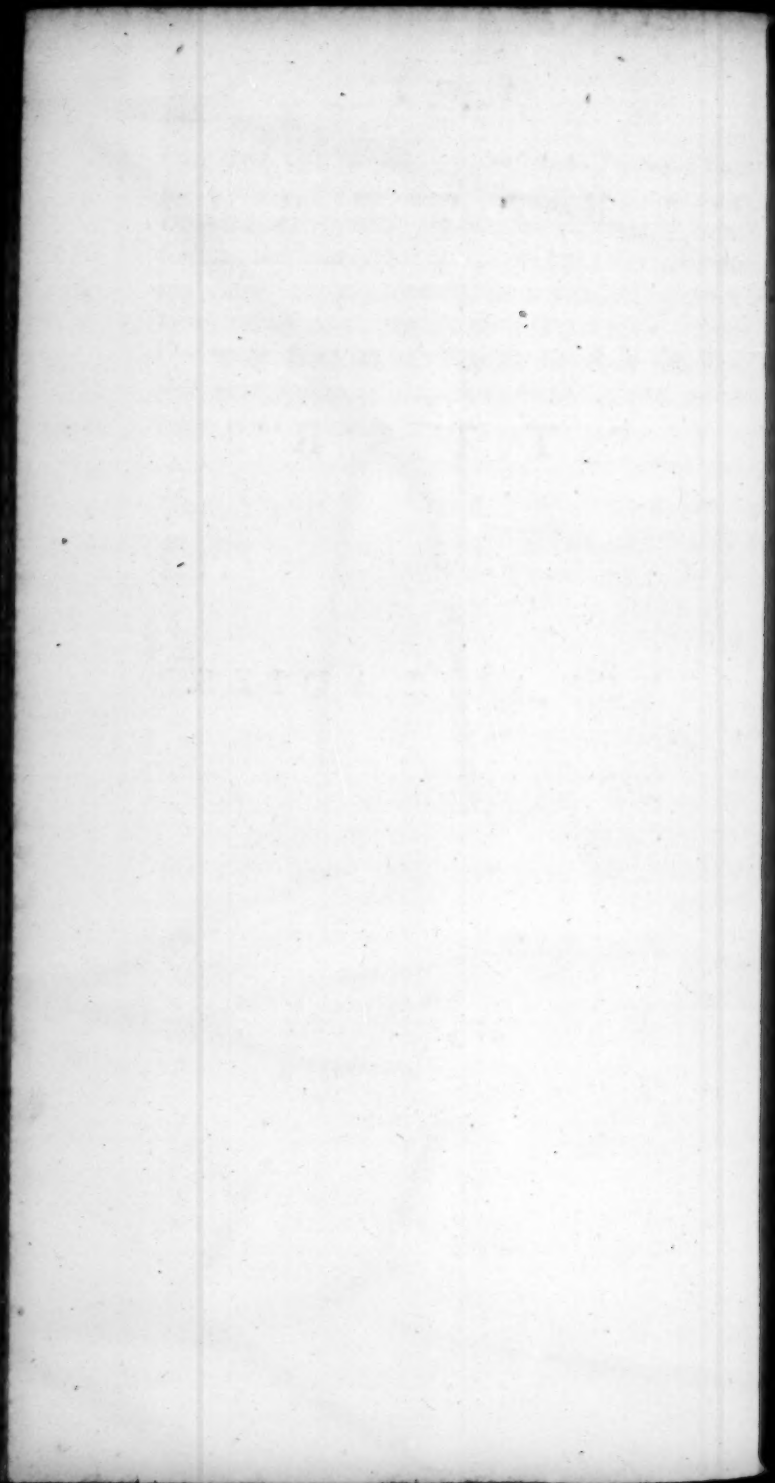
* These verses are printed in Dr Swift's, and our Author's Miscellanies.

L E T T E R S

T O

S E V E R A L L A D I E S.

N 3



L E T T E R S

T O

S E V E R A L L A D I E S *.

L E T T E R I I.

MADAM,

March 1, 1705;

I SEND you the book of Rudiments of Drawing; which you were pleas'd to command, and think myself obliged to inform you at the same time of one of the many excellencies you possess without knowing of them. You are but too good a Painter already; and no picture of Raphael's was ever so beautiful; as that which you have form'd in a certain heart of my acquaintance. Indeed it was but just that the finest lines in nature should be drawn upon the most durable ground; and none could ever be met with, that would so readily receive, or so faithfully retain them; as this Heart. I may boldly say of it, that you will not find its fellow in all the parts of the body in this book. But I must complain to you of my hand, which is an arrant traitor to my heart; for having been copying your picture from thence and from Kneller these three days, it has

* Most of these were printed without the Author's consent, and no doubt are the same upon which the censure is pass'd in the Preface, "That they have too much of a juvenile ambition of Wit, and affectation of Gaiety." And it is pleaded in excuse, "that they were written very young, and the folly was soon over."

done all possible injury to the finest face that ever was made, and to the liveliest image that ever was drawn. I have imagination enough in your absence to trace some resemblance of you; but I have been so long us'd to lose my judgment at the sight of you, that 'tis past my power to correct it by the life. Your picture seems least like when placed before your eyes; and, contrary to all other pictures, receives a manifest disadvantage by being set in the fairest light in the world. The Painters are a very vain generation, and have a long time pretended to rival Nature; but to own the truth to you, she made such a finish'd piece about three-and-twenty years ago (I beg your pardon, Madam; I protest I meant but two-and-twenty) that 'tis in vain for them any longer to contend with her. I know you indeed made one something like it, betwixt five and six years past: 'twas a little girl, done with abundance of spirit and life, and wants nothing but time to be an admirable piece: but, not to flatter your work, I don't think 'twill ever come up to what your father made. However, I would not discourage you; 'tis certain you have a strange happiness in making fine things of a sudden, and at a stroke, with incredible ease and pleasure.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R II.

IT is too much a rule in this town, that when a lady has once done a man a favour, he is to be rude to her ever after. It becomes our sex to take upon us twice as much as yours allow us. By this method I may write to you most impudently, because you once answer'd me modestly; and if you

should never do me that honour for the future, I am to think (like a true coxcomb) that your silence gives consent. Perhaps you wonder why this is address'd to you rather than to Mrs M—, with whom I have the right of an old acquaintance, whereas you are a fine lady, have bright eyes, &c. First, Madam, I make choice of you rather than of your mother, because you are younger than your mother. Secondly, because I fancy you spell better, as having been at school later. Thirdly, because you have nothing to do but to write if you please, and possibly it may keep you from employing yourself worse: it may save some honest neighbouring gentleman from three or four of your pestilent glances. Cast your eyes upon paper, Madam, there you may look innocently: men are seducing, books are dangerous, the amorous ones soften you, and the godly ones give you the spleen. If you look upon trees, they clasp in embraces; birds and beasts make love; the sun is too warm for your blood; the moon melts you into yielding and melancholy. Therefore I say once more, cast your eyes upon paper, and read only such letters as I write, which convey no darts, no flames, but proceed from innocence of soul, and simplicity of heart. Thank God I am an hundred miles off from those eyes! I would sooner trust your hand than them for doing me mischief; and tho' I doubt not some part of the rancour and iniquity of your heart will drop into your pen, yet since it will not attack me on a sudden and unprepar'd, since I may have time while I break open your letter to cross myself and say a Pater-noster, I hope Providence will protect me from all you can attempt at this distance. I am told you are at this hour as handsome as an angel;

for my part I have forgot your face since two winters. You may be grown to a giantess for all I know. I can't tell in any respect what sort of creature you are, only that you are a very mischievous one, whom I shall ever pray to be defended from. But when your minister sends me word you have the small-pox, a good many freckles, or are very pale, I will desire him to give thanks for it in your parish church; which as soon as he shall inform me he has done, I will make you a visit without armour. I will eat any thing you give me without suspicion of poison, take you by the hand without gloves, nay venture to follow you into an arbour without calling the company. This, Madam, is the top of my wishes; but how differently are our desires inclined! You sigh out, in the ardour of your heart, Oh playhouses, parks, operas, assemblies, London! I cry with rapture, Oh woods, gardens, rookeries, fish-ponds, arbours, Mrs M——!

L E T T E R III.

To a L A D Y.

Written on one column of a letter, while Lady M. wrote to the Lady's husband on the other.

THE wits would say, that this must needs be a dull letter, because it is a married one. I am afraid indeed you will find, what spirit there is must be on the side of the wife, and the husband's part, as usual, will prove the dullest. What, an unequal pair are put together in this sheet! in which, though we sin, it is you must do penance. When you look on both sides of this paper, you may fancy that our words (according to a scripture expression) are as a

two-edged sword, whereof Lady M. is the shining blade, and I only the handle. But I can't proceed without so far mortifying Sir Robert as to tell him, that she writes this purely in obedience to me, and that it is but one of those honours a husband receives for the sake of his wife.

It is making court but ill to one fine woman, to shew her the regard we have for another; and yet I must own there is not a period of this epistle but squints towards another over against it. It will be in vain to dissemble: your penetrating eyes cannot but discover, how all the letters that compose these words lean forward after Lady M.'s letters, that seem to bend as much from mine, and fly from them as fast as they are able. Ungrateful letters that they are! which give themselves to another man, in the very presence of him who will yield to no mortal in knowing how to value them.

You will think I forget myself, and am not writing to you; but, let me tell you, 'tis you forget yourself in that thought, for you are almost the only woman to whom one can safely address the praises of another. Besides, can you imagine a man of my importance so stupid as to say fine things to you before your husband? Let us see how far Lady M. herself dares do any thing like it, with all the wit and address she is mistress of. If Sir Robert can be so ignorant (now he is left to himself in the country) to imagine any such matter, let him know from me, that here in town every thing that lady says is taken for satire. For my part, every body knows it is my constant practice to speak truth, and I never do it more than when I call myself

Your, &c.

LETTER IV.

YOU have put me into so much gaiety of temper, that there will not be a serious word in this day's letter. No more, you'll say, there would, if I told you the whole serious business of the town. All last night I continued with you, though your unreasonable regularity drove me out of your doors at three o'clock. I dreamed all over the evening's conversation, and saw the little bed in spite of you. In the morning I waked, very angry at your phantom for leaving me so abruptly.—I know you delight in my mortification. I dined with an old beauty; she appeared at the table like a death's head enamelled. The Egyptians, you know, had such things at their entertainments; but do you think they painted and patched them? however, the last of these objections was soon removed; for the lady had so violent an appetite for a salmon, that she quickly ate all the patches off her face. She divided the fish into three parts; not equal, God knows; for she helped Gay to the head, me to the middle, and making the rest much the largest part, took it herself, and cried very naively, I'll be content with my own tail.

My supper was as singular as my dinner. It was with a great poet and ode-maker (that is, a great poet out of his wits, or out of his way.) He came to me very hungry; not for want of a dinner (for that I should make no jest of), but having forgot to dine. He fell most furiously on the broiled relics of a shoulder of mutton, commonly called a blade-bone: he professed he never tasted so exquisite a thing! begged me to tell him what joint it was, wondered he had never heard the name of this joint, or seen it

at other tables; and desired to know how he might direct his butcher to cut out the same for the future? And yet this man, so ignorant in modern butchery, has cut up half a hundred heroes, and quartered five or six miserable lovers in every tragedy he has written. I have nothing more to tell you to-day.

L E T T E R V.

The ANSWER.

Y OU should have my day too, Sir, but indeed I slept it out, and so I'll give you all that was left, my last night's entertainment. You know the company. I went in late, in order to be better received; but unluckily came in as deuce-ace was flinging (Lord H. would say I came in the nick.) The lady coloured, and the men took the name of the Lord in vain: nobody spoke to me, and I sat down disappointed: then affecting a careless air, gaped, and cried seven or eight times, *D'ye win or lose?* I could safely say at that moment I had no temptation to any one of the seven lively sins; and in the innocent way I was, happy had it been for me if I had died! moralizing sat I by the hazard-table: I looked upon the uncertainty of riches, the decay of beauty, and the crash of worlds, with as much contempt as ever Plato did. But ah! the frailty of human nature! some ridiculous thought came into my head, wakened my passions, which burst forth into a violent laughter: I rose from my seat, and not considering the just resentments of the losing gamesters, hurled a ball of paper cross the table, which stopped the dice, and turned up seven instead of five. Cursed on all sides, and not knowing where to fly, I threw

myself into a chair, which I demolished, and never spoke a word after. We went to supper, and a lady said, *Miss G. looks prodigiously like a tree*: every body agreed to it, and I had not curiosity to ask the meaning of that sprightly fancy: find it out, and let me know. Adieu, 'tis time to dress, and begin the business of the day.

L E T T E R VI.

In the style of a LADY.

PRAY what is your opinion of *Fate*? for I must confess I am one of those that believe in Fate and Predestination.—No, I can't go so far as that, but I own I am of opinion one's stars may incline, though not compel one; and that is a sort of free will; for we may be able to resist inclination, but not compulsion.

Don't you think they have got in the most preposterous fashion this winter that ever was, of flouncing the petticoat so very deep, that it looks like an entire coat of lutestring?

It is a little cool indeed for this time of year; but then, my dear, you'll allow it has an extreme clean pretty look.

Ay, so has my muslin apron; but I would not chuse to make it a winter suit of cloaths.

Well, now I'll swear, child, you have put me in mind of a very pretty dress; let me die if I don't think a muslin flounce, made very full, would give one a very agreeable *firtation* air.

Well, I swear it would be charming! and I should like it of all things.—Do you think there are any such things as *Spirits*?

Do you believe there is any such place as the Elysian Fields? O Gad, that would be charming! I wish I were to go to the Elysian Fields when I die! and then I should not care if I were to leave the world to-morrow: but is one to meet there with what one has loved most in this world?

Now you must tell me this positively: to be sure you can, or what do I correspond with you for, if you won't tell me all! You know I abominate reserve.

LETTER VII.

Bath, 1714.

YOU are to understand, Madam, that my passion for your fair self and your sister, has been divided with the most wonderful regularity in the world. Even from my infancy I have been in love with one after the other of you, week by week, and my journey to Bath fell out in the three hundred seventy-sixth week of the reign of my sovereign lady Sylvia. At the present writing hereof it is the three hundred eighty-ninth week of the reign of your most Serene Majesty, in whose service I was list'd some weeks before I beheld your sister. This information will account for my writing to either of you hereafter, as either shall happen to be Queen-regent at that time.

Pray tell your sister, all the good qualities and virtuous inclinations she has, never gave me so much pleasure in her conversation, as that one vice of her obstinacy will give me mortification this month. Ratcliffe commands her to Bath, and she refuses! indeed if I were in Berkshire I should honour her for this obstinacy, and magnify her no less for disobe-

dience, than we do the Barcelonians. But people change with the change of places, (as we see of late), and virtues become vices, when they cease to be for one's interest, with me as with others.

Yet let me tell her, she will never look so finely while she is upon earth, as she would here in the water. It is not here as in most other instances, for those ladies that would please extremely, must go out of their own element. She does not make half so good a figure on horseback as Christina Queen of Sweden; but were she once seen in the Bath, no man would part with her for the best mermaid in Christendom. You know I have seen you often, I perfectly know how you look in black and in white, I have experienced the utmost you can do in colours; but all your movements, all your graceful steps, deserve not half the glory you might here attain of a moving and easy behaviour in buckram; something between swimming and walking, free enough, and more modestly half naked than you can appear any where else. You have conquered enough already by land; show your ambition, and vanquish also by water. The buckram I mention is a dress peculiarly useful at this time, when, we are told, they are bringing over the fashion of German ruffs: you ought to use yourselves to some degrees of stiffness beforehand; and when our ladies chins have been tickled a-while with starched muslin and wire, they may possibly bear the brush of a German beard and whisker.

I could tell you a delightful story of Dr P. but want room to display it in all its shining circumstances. He had heard it was an excellent cure for love, to kiss the aunt of the person beloved, who is generally of years and experience enough to damp the fiercest

flame: he tried this course in his passion, and kissed Mrs E—— at Mr D——'s; but he says it will not do, and that he loves you as much as ever.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

To the SAME.

IF you ask how the waters agree with me, I must tell you so very well, that I question how you and I should agree if we were in a room by ourselves. Mrs —— has honestly assured me, that but for some whims which she can't entirely conquer, she would go and see the world with me in man's cloaths. Even you, Madam, I fancy (if you would not partake in our adventures) would wait our coming in at the evening with some impatience, and be well enough pleased to hear them by the fireside: that would be better than reading romances, unless Lady M. would be our historian. What raises these desires in me, is an acquaintance I am beginning with my Lady Sandwich, who has all the spirit of the last age, and all the gay experience of a pleasurable life. It were as scandalous an omission to come to the Bath and not to see my Lady Sandwich, as it had formerly been to have travelled to Rome without visiting the Queen of Sweden. She is, in a word, the best thing this country has to boast of; and as she has been all that a woman of spirit could be, so she still continues that easy and independent creature that a sensible woman always will be.

I must tell you a truth, which is not, however, much to my credit. I never thought so much of yourself and your sister, as since I have been fourscore

miles distance from you. In the Forest I looked upon you as good neighbours, at London as pretty kind of women, but here as divinities, angels, goddesses, or what you will. In the same manner, I never knew at what rate I valued your life, till you were upon the point of dying. If Mrs — and you will but fall very sick every season, I shall certainly die for you. Seriously, I value you both so much, that I esteem others much the less for your sakes; you have robbed me of the pleasure of esteeming a thousand pretty qualities in them, by showing me so many finer in yourselves. There are but two things in the world which could make you indifferent to me, which, I believe, you are not capable of, I mean ill nature and malice. I have seen enough of you, not to overlook any frailty you could have, and nothing less than a vice can make me like you less. I expect you should discover, by my conduct towards you both, that this is true, and that therefore you should pardon a thousand things in me for that one disposition. Expect nothing from me but truth and freedom, and I shall always be thought by you what I always am,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

To the SAME.

1714.

I RETURNED home as slow and as contemplative after I had parted from you, as my Lord *** retired from the Court and glory, to his country-seat and wife, a week ago. I found here a dismal desponding letter from the son of another great cour-

tier who expects the same fate, and who tells me the great ones of the earth will now take it very kindly of the mean ones, if they will savour them with a visit by day-light. With what joy would they lay down all their schemes of glory, did they but know you have the generosity to drink their healths once a day, as soon as they are fallen? Thus the unhappy, by the sole merit of their misfortunes, become the care of Heaven and you. I intended to have put this last into verse; but in this age of ingratitude my best friends forsake me, I mean my rhymes.

I desire Mrs P—— to stay her stomach with these half hundred plays, till I can procure her a romance big enough to satisfy her great soul with adventures. As for novels, I fear she can depend upon none from me but that of my Life, which I am still, as I have been, contriving all possible methods to shorten, for the greater ease both of the historian and the reader. May she believe all the passion and tenderness expressed in these romances to be but a faint image of what I bear her, and may you (who read nothing) take the same truth upon hearing it from me. You will both injure me very much, if you don't think me a truer friend than ever any romantic lover, or any imitator of their style could be.

The days of beauty are as the days of greatness, and so long all the world are your adorers. I am one of these unambitious people who will love you forty years hence, when your eyes begin to twinkle in a retirement, and without the vanity which every one now will take to be thought

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X.

THE more I examine my own mind, the more romantic I find myself. Methinks it is a noble spirit of contradiction to Fate and Fortune, not to give up those that are snatched from us; but to follow them the more, the farther they are removed from the sense of it. Sure Flattery never travelled so far as three thousand miles; it is now only for Truth, which overtakes all things, to reach you at this distance. 'Tis a generous piece of popery, that pursues even those who are to be eternally absent into another world; whether you think it right or wrong, you'll own the very extravagance a sort of piety. I can't be satisfied with strowing flowers over you, and barely honouring you as a thing lost; but must consider you as a glorious though remote being, and be sending addresses after you. You have carried away so much of me, that what remains is daily languishing and dying over my acquaintance here, and, I believe, in three or four months more I shall think *Aurat Bazar* as good a place as *Covent-Garden*. You may imagine this is raillery, but I am really so far gone as to take pleasure in reveries of this kind. Let them say I am romantic; so is every one said to be, that either admires a fine thing or does one. On my conscience, as the world goes, 'tis hardly worth any body's while to do one for the honour of it: glory, the only pay of generous actions, is now as ill paid as other just debts; and neither Mrs Macfarland for immolating her lover, nor you, for constancy to your lord, must ever hope to be compared to Lucretia or Portia.

I write this in some anger; for having, since you went, frequented those people most, who seemed most in your favour, I heard nothing that concerned you talk'd of so often, as that you went away in a black full-bottom'd wig; which I did but assert to be a bob, and was answered, *Love is blind*. I am persuaded your wig had never suffered this criticism, but on the score of your head, and the two eyes that are in it.

Pray, when you write to me, talk of yourself; there is nothing I so much desire to hear of: talk a great deal of yourself; that she who I always thought talked best, may speak upon the best subject. The shrines and reliques you tell me of, no way engage my curiosity; I had ten times rather go on pilgrimage to see one such face as yours, than both St John Baptist's heads. I wish (since you are grown so covetous of golden things) you had not only all the fine statues you talk of, but even the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up, provided you were to travel no farther than you could carry it.

The court of Vienna is very edifying. The ladies, with respect to their husbands, seem to understand that text literally, that commands *to bear one another's burdens*: but, I fancy, many a man there is like *Issachar*, an *ass* between *two burdens*. I shall look upon you no more as a Christian, when you pass from that charitable court to the land of jealousy. I expect to hear an exact account how, and at what places, you leave one of the thirty-nine articles after another, as you approach to the land of Infidelity. Pray, how far are you got already? Amidst the pomp of high mass, and the ravishing trills of a Sunday opera, what did you think of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England? Had you from your heart a re-

verence for Sternhold and Hopkins? how did your Christian virtues hold out in so long a voyage? you have, it seems, (without passing the bounds of Christendom) out-travelled the sin of fornication: in a little time you'll look upon some others with more patience, than the ladies here are capable of. I reckon you'll time it so well as to make your religion last to the verge of Christendom, that you may discharge your chaplain (as humanity requires) in a place where he may find some business.

I doubt not but I shall be told (when I come to follow you through those countries) in how pretty a manner you accommodated yourself to the customs of the true Mussulmen. They will tell me at what town you practised to sit on the Sopha, at what village you learned to fold a turbant, where you was bathed and anointed, and where you parted with your black full bottom. How happy must it be for a gay young woman, to live in a country where it is a part of religious worship to be *giddy-headed*? I shall hear at Belgrade how the good bashaw received you with tears of joy, how he was charmed with your agreeable manner of pronouncing the words *Allah* and *Muhamed*; and how earnestly you joined with him in exhorting your friend to embrace that religion. But I think his objection was a just one, that it was attended with some circumstances under which he could not properly represent his Britannic Majesty.

Lastly, I shall hear how, the first night you lay at Pera, you had a vision of Mahomet's paradise; and happily awaked without a foul, from which blessed moment the beautiful body was left at full liberty to perform all the agreeable functions it was made for.

I see I have done in this letter, as I often have done in your company, talk'd myself into a good humour, when I begun in an ill one; the pleasure of addressing to you makes me run on, and 'tis in your own power to shorten this letter as much as you please, by giving over when you please; so I'll make it no longer by apologies.

LETTER XI.

YOU have asked me news a hundred times at the first word you spoke to me, which some would interpret as if you expected nothing better from my lips: and truly 'tis not a sign two lovers are together, when they can be so impertinent as to enquire what the world does? All I mean by this is, that either you or I are not in love with the other: I leave you to guess which of the two is that stupid and insensible creature, so blind to the other's excellencies and charms.

This then shall be a letter of news; and sure, if you did not think me the humblest creature in the world, you could never imagine a poet could dwindle to a brother of Dawks and Dyer, from a rival of Tate and Brady.

The Earl of Oxford has behaved so bravely, that in this act at least he might seem above man, if he had not just now voided a stone, to prove him subject to human infirmities. The utmost weight of affliction from ministerial power and popular hatred, were almost worth bearing, for the glory of such a dauntless conduct as he has shewn under it.

You may soon have your wish, to enjoy the gallant sights of armies, incampments, standards waving

over your brother's corn-fields, and the pretty windings of the Thames stained with the blood of men. Your barbarity, which I have heard so long exclaimed against in town and country, may have its fill of destruction. I would not add one circumstance usual in all descriptions of calamity, that of the many rapes committed, or to be committed upon those unfortunate women that *delight in war*: but God forgive me—in this martial age, if I could, I would buy a regiment for your sake and Mrs P——'s, and some others, whom, I have cause to fear, no fair means will prevail upon.

Those eyes, that care not how much mischief is done, or how great slaughter is committed, so they have but a fine show; those very female eyes will be infinitely delighted with the camp which is speedily to be formed in Hyde-park. The tents are carried thither this morning, new regiments with new cloaths and furniture, far exceeding the late cloth and linen designed by his Grace for the soldiery. The sight of so many gallant fellows, with all the pomp and glare of war, yet undeformed by battles, those scenes which England has, for many years, only beheld on stages, may possibly invite your curiosity to this place.

By our latest account from Duke-street, Westminster, the conversion of T. G. Esq; is reported in a manner somewhat more particular: That upon the seizure of his Flanders mares, he seemed more than ordinarily disturbed for some hours, sent for his ghostly father, and resolved to bear his loss like a Christian; till about the hours of seven or eight the coaches and horses of several of the nobility passing by his window towards Hyde-park, he could no longer endure the disappointment, but instantly went

out, took the oath of abjuration, and recovered his dear horses, which carried him in triumph to the ring. The poor distressed Roman Catholics, now unhorsed and uncharioted, cry out with the Psalmist, *Some in chariots, and some on horses, but we will invoke the name of the Lord.*

I am, &c.

LETTER XII.

THE weather is too fine for any one that loves the country to leave it at this season, when every smile of the sun, like the smile of a coy lady, is as dear as it is uncommon; and I am so much in the taste of rural pleasures, I had rather see the sun than any thing he can shew me, except yourself. I despise every fine thing in town, not excepting your new gown, till I see you dressed in it, (which, by the way, I don't like the better for the red; the leaves, I think, are very pretty.) I am growing fit, I hope, for a better world, of which the light of the sun is but a shadow: for I doubt not but God's works here, are what come nearest to his works there; and that a true relish of the beauties of Nature, is the most easy preparation, and gentlest transition to an enjoyment of those of heaven: as, on the contrary, a true town-life of hurry, confusion, noise, slander, and dissention, is a sort of apprenticeship to hell and its furies. I'm endeavouring to put my mind into as quiet a situation as I can, to be ready to receive that stroke which, I believe, is coming upon me, and have fully resigned myself to yield to it. The separation of my soul and body is what I could think of with less pain; for I am very sure he that made

it will take care of it, and in whatever state he pleases it shall be, that state must be right: but I cannot think, without tears, of being separated from my friends, when their condition is so doubtful, that they may want even such assistance as mine. Sure it is more merciful to take from us after death all memory of what we loved or pursued here; for else what a torment would it be to a spirit, still to love those creatures it is quite divided from? unless we suppose, that in a more exalted life, all that we esteemed in this imperfect state will affect us no more than what we loved in our infancy concerns us now.

This is an odd way of writing to a lady, and, I'm sensible, would throw me under a great deal of ridicule, were you to show this letter among your acquaintance: but perhaps you may not yourself be quite a stranger to this way of thinking. I heartily wish your life may be so long and so happy, as never to let you think *quite so far* as I am now led to do; but, to think *a little towards it*, is what will make you the happier, and the easier at all times.

There are no pleasures or amusements that I don't wish you, and therefore 'tis no small grief to me that I shall, for the future, be less able to partake with you in them: but let Fortune do her worst, whatever she makes us lose, as long as she never makes us lose our honesty and our independence. I despise from my heart whoever parts with the first, and I pity from my soul whoever quits the latter.

I am grieved at Mr G——'s condition in this last respect of dependence. He has merit, good nature, and integrity, three qualities that, I fear, are too often lost upon great men; or, at least, are not all three

a match for that one which is opposed to them, Flattery. I wish it may not, soon or late, displace him from the favour he now possesses, and seems to like. I'm sure his late action deserves eternal favour and esteem: Lord Bathurst was charmed with it, who came hither to see me before his journey. He asked and spoke very particularly of you. To-morrow Mr Fortescue comes to me from London about B——'s suit in *forma pauperis*. That poor man looks starved: he tells me you have been charitable to him. Indeed 'tis wanted; the poor creature can scarce stir or speak; and, I apprehend he will die, just as he gets something to live upon. Adieu.

L E T T E R XIII.

THIS is a day of wishes for you; and I hope you have long known, there is not one good one which I do not form in your behalf. Every year that passes, I wish some things more for my friends, and some things less for myself. Yet were I to tell you what I wish for you in particular, it would be only to repeat in prose, what I told you last year in rhyme, (so sincere is my poetry :) I can only add, that as I then wished you a friend *, I now wish that friend were Mrs —.

Absence is a short kind of death; and in either, one can only wish, that the friends we are separated from may be happy with those that are left them. I am therefore very solicitous that you may pass much agreeable time together: I am sorry to say I envy you no other companion; though I hope you

* To Mrs — on her Birth-day.

"O be thou blest with all that Heav'n can send,

"Long health, long youth, long pleasure, and a friend."

have others that you like; and I am always pleased in that hope, when it is not attended with any fears on your own account.

I was troubled to leave you both, just as I fancied we should begin to live together in the country. 'Twas a little like dying, the moment one had got all one desired in this world: yet I go away with one generous sort of satisfaction, that what I part with you are to inherit.

I know you would both be pleased to hear some certain news of a friend departed; to have the adventures of his passage, and the new regions thro' which he travelled, described; and, upon the whole, to know that he is as happy where he now is, as while he lived among you: but indeed I (like many a poor unprepared soul) have seen nothing I like so well as what I left: no scenes of paradise, no happy bowers equal to those on the banks of the Thames. Where-ever I wander, one reflection strikes me; I wish you were as free as I; or at least had a tie as tender, and as reasonable as mine, to a relation that as well deserved your constant thought, and to whom you would be always pulled back (in such a manner as I am) by the heart-string. I have never been well since I set out; but don't tell my mother so; it will trouble her too much: and as probably the same reason may prevent her sending a true account of her health to me, I must desire you to acquaint me. I would gladly hear the country air improves your own; but don't flatter me when you are ill, that I may be the better satisfied when you say you are well: for these are things in which one may be sincerer to a reasonable friend, than to a fond and partial parent. Adieu.

LETTER XIV.

YOU can't be surprized to find him a dull correspondent, whom you have known so long for a dull companion : and though I am pretty sensible that if I have any wit, I may as well write to show it as not ; yet I'll content myself with giving you as plain a history of my pilgrimage, as Purchas himself, or as John Bunyan could do of his *walking through the wilderness of this world*, &c.

First, then, I went up by water to Hampton-Court, unattended by all but my own virtues ; which were not of so modest a nature as to keep themselves or me concealed, for I met the Prince with all his ladies on horse-back, coming from hunting. Mrs B*** and Mrs L*** took me into protection (contrary to the laws against harbouring Papists) and gave me a dinner, with some thing I liked better, an opportunity of conversation with Mrs H***. We all agreed that the life of a maid of honour was of all things the most miserable, and wished that every woman who envied it, had a specimen of it. To eat Westphalia-ham in a morning, ride over hedges and ditches on borrowed hacks, come home in the heat of the day with a fever, and (what is worse an hundred times) with a red mark in the forehead from an uneasy hat ; all this may qualify them to make excellent wives for fox-hunters, and bear abundance of ruddy complexioned children. As soon as they can wipe off the sweat of the day, they must simmer an hour, and catch cold in the Princess's apartment : from thence (as Shakespear has it) to *dinner, with what appetite they may*—and after that, till midnight, walk, work, or think, which they please. I can easily believe, no

lone-house in Wales, with a mountain and a rookery, is more contemplative than this Court; and as a proof of it, I need only tell you, Mrs L*** walked with me three or four hours by moonlight, and we met no creature of any quality but the King, who gave audience to the Vice-chamberlain, all alone, under the garden-wall.

In short, I heard of no ball, assembly, basset-table, or any place where two or three were gathered together, except Madam Killmansfegg's, to which I had the honour to be invited, and the grace to stay away.

I was heartily tired, and posted to — park: there we had an excellent discourse of quackery; Dr S*** was mentioned with honour. Lady — walked a whole hour abroad without dying after it, at least in the time I stayed, though she seemed to be fainting, and had convulsive motions several times in her head.

I arrived in the Forest by Tuesday noon, having fled from the face (I wish I could say the horned face) of Moses, who dined in the mid-way thither. I pass'd the rest of the day in those woods where I have so often enjoyed a book and a friend; I made a Hymn as I pass'd through, which ended with a sigh, that I will not tell you the meaning of.

Your Doctor is gone the way of all his patients, and was hard put to it how to dispose of an estate miserably unwieldy, and splendidly unuseful to him. Sir Samuel Garth says, that for Ratcliffe to leave a library, was as if a Eunuch should found a Seraglio. Dr S — lately told a lady, he wondered she could be alive after him: she made answer, she wondered at it for two reasons, because Dr Radcliffe was dead, and because Dr S — was living. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER XV.

NOTHING could have more of that melancholy which once used to please me, than my last day's journey; for after having passed through my favourite woods in the Forest, with a thousand reveries of past pleasures, I rid over hanging hills, whose tops were edged with groves, and whose feet watered with winding rivers, listening to the falls of cataracts below, and the murmuring of the winds above: the gloomy verdure of Stonor succeeded to these; and then the shades of the evening overtook me. The moon rose in the clearest sky I ever saw, by whose solemn light I paced on slowly without company, or any interruption to the range of my thoughts. About a mile before I reached Oxford, all the bells toll'd in different notes; the clocks of every college answered one another, and sounded forth (some in a deeper, some in a softer tone) that it was eleven at night. All this was no ill preparation to the life I have led since, among those old walls, venerable galleries, stone porticos, studious walks, and solitary scenes of the University. I wanted nothing but a black gown and a salary, to be as mere a book-worm as any there. I conformed myself to the college hours, was rolled up in books, lay in one of the most ancient, dusky parts of the University, and was as dead to the world as any hermit of the desert. If any thing was alive or awake in me, it was a little vanity, such as even those good men used to entertain, when the monks *of their own order* extolled their piety and abstraction: for I found myself received with a sort of respect which this idle part of mankind, the learned, pay to their own spe-

cies, who are as considerable here, as the busy, the gay, and the ambitious are in your world.

Indeed I was treated in such a manner, that I could not but sometimes ask myself in my mind, what college I was founder of, or what library I had built? Methinks I do very ill to return to the world again; to leave the only place where I make a figure, and, from seeing myself seated with dignity on the most conspicuous shelves of a library, put myself into the abject posture of lying at a lady's feet in St James's square.

I will not deny but that, like Alexander, in the midst of my glory I am wounded, and find myself a mere man. To tell you from whence the dart comes is to no purpose, since neither of you will take the tender care to draw it out of my heart, and suck the poison with your lips.

Here, at my Lord H——'s, I see a creature nearer an angel than a woman (though a woman be very near as good as an angel.) I think you have formerly heard me mention Mrs T— as a credit to the Maker of angels: she is a relation of his lordship's, and he gravely proposed her to me for a wife; being tender of her interests, and knowing (what is a shame to Providence) that she is less indebted to fortune than I. I told him 'twas what he never could have thought of, if it had not been his misfortune to be blind; and what I never could think of, while I had eyes to see both her and myself.

I must not conclude without telling you, that I will do the utmost in the affair you desire. It would be an inexpressible joy to me if I could serve you, and I will always do all I can to give myself pleasure. I wish as well for you as for myself; I am in

love with you both, as much as I am with myself, for I find myself most so with either, when I least suspect it.

LETTER XVI.

THE chief cause I have to repent my leaving the town, is the uncertainty I am in every day of your sister's state of health. I really expected by every post to have heard of her recovery, but, on the contrary, each letter has been a new awakening to my apprehensions, and I have ever since suffered alarms upon alarms on her account. No one can be more sensibly touched at this than I; nor any danger of any I love could affect me with more uneasiness. I have felt some weaknesses of a tender kind, which I would not be free from; and I am glad to find my value for people so rightly placed, as to perceive them on this occasion.

I cannot be so good a Christian as to be willing to resign my own happiness here, for hers in another life. I do more than wish for her safety, for every wish I make I find immediately changed into a prayer, and a more fervent one than I had learned to make till now.

May her life be longer and happier than perhaps herself may desire, that is, as long and as happy as you can wish. May her beauty be as great as possible, that is, as it always was, or as yours is. But whatever ravages a merciless distemper may commit, I dare promise her boldly, what few (if any) of her makers of visits and compliments dare to do, she shall have one man as much her admirer as ever. As for your part, Madam, you have me

so more than ever, since I have been a witness to the generous tenderness you have shewn upon this occasion.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XVII.

I AM not at all concerned to think that this letter may be less entertaining than some I have sent : I know you are a friend that will think a kind letter as good as a diverting one. He that gives you his mirth, makes a much less present than he that gives you his heart ; and true friends would rather see such thoughts as they communicate only to one another, than what they squander about to all the world. They who can set a right value upon any thing, will prize one tender, well-meant word, above all that ever made them laugh in their lives. If I did not think so of you, I should never have taken much pains to endeavour to please you, by writing, or any thing else. Wit, I am sure, I want ; at least in the degree that I see others have it, who would at all seasons alike be entertaining ; but I would willingly have some qualities that may be (at some seasons) of more comfort to myself, and of more service to my friends. I would cut off my own head, if it had nothing better than wit in it ; and tear out my own heart, if it had no better dispositions than to love only myself, and laugh at all my neighbours.

I know you'll think it an-agreeable thing to hear that I have done a great deal of Homer. If it be tolerable, the world may thank you for it ; for if I could have seen you every day, and imagined my company could have every day pleased you, I should

scarce have thought it worth while to please the world. How many verses could I gladly have left unfinished, and turned into it, for people to say what they would of, had I been permitted to pass all those hours more pleasingly! Whatever some may think, Fame is a thing I am much less covetous of than your friendship; for that, I hope, will last all my life; the other I cannot answer for. What if they should both grow greater after my death? Alas! they would both be of no advantage to me! therefore think upon it, and love me as well as ever you can while I live.

Now I talk of fame, I send you my Temple of Fame, which is just come out; but my sentiments about it you will see better by this epigram.

What's Fame by men, by custom of the nation,
Is call'd in women only reputation :

About them both why keep we such a pother?

Part you with one, and I'll renounce the other.

L E T T E R XVIII.

ALL the pleasure or use of familiar letters, is to give us the assurance of a friend's welfare; at least 'tis all I know, who am a mortal enemy and despiser of what they call fine letters. In this view, I promise you, it will always be a satisfaction to me to write letters and to receive them from you; because I unfeignedly have your good at my heart, and am that thing which many people make only a subject to display their fine sentiments upon, a friend; which is a character that admits of little to be said, till something may be done. Now let me fairly tell you, I don't like your style: 'tis very pretty, there-

fore I don't like it; and if you write as well as Voiture, I would not give a farthing for such letters, unless I were to sell them to be printed. Methinks I have lost the Mrs L*** I formerly knew, who writ and talked like other people (and sometimes better.) You must allow me to say, you have not said a sensible word in all your letter, except where you speak of shewing kindness, and expecting it in return: but the addition you make about your being but two-and-twenty, is again in the style of wit and abomination. To shew you how very unsatisfactorily you write, in all your letters you've never told me how you do. Indeed I see 'twas absolutely necessary for me to write to you, before you continued to take more notice of me, for I ought to tell you what you are to expect; that is to say, kindness, which I never failed (I hope) to return: and not wit, which if I want, I am not much concerned, because judgment is a better thing; and if I had, I would make use of it rather to play upon those I despised, than to trifle with those I loved. You see, in short, after what manner you may most agreeably write to me: tell me you are my friend, and you can be no more at a loss about that article. As I have opened my mind upon this to you, it may also serve for Mr H—, who will see by it what manner of letters he must expect, if he corresponds with me. As I am too seriously yours and his servant to put turns upon you instead of good wishes, so in return I should have nothing but honest plain How-d'ye's, and Pray remember me's; which not being fit to be shown any body for wit, may be a proof we correspond only for ourselves, in mere friendliness; as doth, God is my witness,

Your very, &c.

LETTER XIX.

IT is with infinite satisfaction I am made acquainted that your brother will at last prove your relation, and has entertained such sentiments as became him in your concern. I have been prepared for this by degrees, having several times received from Mrs *** that which is one of the greatest pleasures, the knowledge that others entered into my own sentiments concerning you. I ever was of opinion that you wanted no more to be vindicated than to be known. As I have often consoled with you in your adversities, so I have a right, which but few can pretend to, of congratulating on the prospect of your better fortunes; and I hope, for the future, to have the concern I have felt for you overpaid in your felicities. Though you modestly say the world has left you, yet, I verily believe, it is coming to you again as fast as it can: for, to give the world its due, it is always very fond of merit, when it is past its power to oppose it: therefore, if you can, take it into favour again upon its repentance, and continue in it: but if you are resolved in revenge to rob the world of so much example as you may afford it, I believe your design will be in vain: for even in a monastery your devotions cannot carry you so far toward the next world as to make this lose the sight of you; but you'll be like a star that, while it is fixed to heaven, shines over all the earth.

Wheresoever Providence shall dispose of the most valuable thing I know, I shall ever follow you with my sincerest wishes, and my best thoughts will be perpetually waiting upon you, when you never hear of me nor them. Your own guardian angels cannot

be more constant, nor more silent. I beg you will never cease to think me your friend, that you may not be guilty of that which you never yet knew to commit, an injustice. As I have hitherto been so in spite of the world, so hereafter, if it be possible you should ever be more opposed, and more deserted, I should only be so much the more

Your faithful, &c.

L E T T E R XX.

I CAN say little to recommend the letters I shall write to you, but that they will be the most impartial representations of a free heart, and the truest copies you ever saw, though of a very mean original. Not a feature will be softened, or any advantageous light employed to make the ugly thing a little less hideous; but you shall find it, in all respects, most horribly like. You will do me an injustice if you look upon any thing I shall say from this instant as a compliment, either to you or to myself: whatever I write will be the real thought of that hour; and I know you'll no more expect it of me to persevere till death, in every sentiment or notion I now set down, than you would imagine a man's face should never change when once his picture was drawn.

The freedom I shall use in this manner of *thinking aloud*, may indeed prove me a fool; but it will prove me one of the best sort of fools, the honest ones. And since what folly we have will infallibly buoy up at one time or other in spite of all our art to keep it down, methinks 'tis almost foolish to take any pains to conceal it at all, and almost knavish to do it from those that are our friends. If Momus's pro-

ject had taken, of having windows in our breasts, I should be for carrying it further, and making those windows casements; that while a man showed his heart to all the world, he might do something more for his friends; even give it them, and trust it to their handling. I think I love you as well as King Herod did Herodias, (though I never had so much as one dance with you), and would as freely give you my heart in a dish, as he did another's head. But since Jupiter will not have it so, I must be content to shew my taste in life, as I do my taste in painting, by loving to have as little drapery as possible: not that I think every body naked altogether so fine a sight as yourself and a few more would be, but because 'tis good to use people to what they must be acquainted with; and there will certainly come some day of judgment or other, to uncover every soul of us. We shall then see that the prudes of this world owed all their fine figure only to their being straiter laced than the rest; and that they are naturally as arrant squabs as those that went more loose, nay, as those that never girded their loins at all.—But a particular reason that may engage you to write your thoughts the more freely to me is, that I am confident no one knows you better; for I find, when others express their thoughts of you, they fall very short of mine, and I know, at the same time, theirs are such as you would think sufficiently in your favour.

You may easily imagine how desirous I must be of a correspondence with a person who had taught me long ago that it was as possible to esteem at first sight as to love; and who has since ruined me for all the conversation of one sex, and almost all the

friendship of the other. I am but too sensible thro' your means, that the company of men wants a certain softness to recommend it, and that of women wants every thing else. How often have I been quietly going to take possession of that tranquillity and indolence I had so long found in the country, when one evening of your conversation has spoiled me for a solitaire! Books have lost their effect upon me, and I was convinced since I saw you, that there is one alive wiser than all the sages. A plague of female wisdom! it makes a man ten times more uneasy than his own. What is very strange, Virtue herself (when you have the dressing her) is too amiable for one's repose. You might have done a world of good in your time, if you had allowed half the fine gentlemen who have seen you, to have conversed with you; they would have been strangely bit, while they thought only to fall in love with a fair lady, and you had bewitched them with Reason and Virtue (two beauties that the very fops pretend to no acquaintance with.)

The unhappy distance at which we correspond, removes a great many of those restrictions and punctilious decorums that oftentimes in nearer conversation prejudice truth, to save good breeding. I may now hear of my faults, and you of your good qualities, without a blush; we converse upon such unfortunate generous terms, as exclude the regards of fear, shame, or design, in either of us. And, methinks, it would be as paltry a part to impose (even in a single thought) upon each other in this state of separation, as for spirits of a different sphere, who have so little intercourse with us, to employ that

little (as some would make us think they do) in putting tricks and delusions upon poor mortals.

Let me begin then, Madam, by asking you a question, that may enable me to judge better of my own conduct than most instances of my life. in what manner did I behave in the last hour I saw you? What degree of concern did I discover when I felt a misfortune which, I hope, you will never feel, that of parting from what one most esteems? for if my parting looked but like that of your common acquaintance, I am the greatest of all the hypocrites that ever decency made.

I never since pass by your house but with the same sort of melancholy that we feel upon seeing the tomb of a friend, which only serves to put us in mind of what we have lost. I reflect upon the circumstances of your departure, which I was there a witness of, (your behaviour in what I may call your last moments), and I indulge a gloomy kind of pleasure in thinking that those last moments were given to me. I would fain imagine that this was not accidental, but proceeded from a penetration which, I know, you have, in finding out the truth of people's sentiments; and that you were willing the last man that *would have* parted from you, should be the last that *did*. I really looked upon you just as the friends of Curtius might have done upon that hero, at the instant when he was devoting himself to glory, and running to be lost out of generosity: I was obliged to admire your resolution, in as great a degree as I deplored it; and had only to wish, that Heaven would reward so much virtue as was to be taken from us, with all the felicities it could enjoy elsewhere.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X X L

I CAN never have too many of your letters. I am angry at every scrap of paper lost; and tho' it is but an odd compliment to compare a fine lady to a Sibyl, your leaves, methinks, like hers, are too good to be committed to the winds; tho' I have no other way of receiving them but by those unfaithful messengers. I have had but three, and I reckon that short one from D——, which was rather a dying ejaculation than a letter.

You have contrived to say in your last the two things most pleasing to me: the first, that whatever be the fate of your letters, you will continue to write in the discharge of your conscience: the other is, the justice you do me, in taking what I writ to you in the serious manner it was meant; it is the point upon which I can bear no suspicion, and in which, above all, I desire to be thought serious. It would be vexatious indeed, if you should pretend to take that for wit, which is no more than the natural overflowing of a heart improved by an esteem for you; but since you tell me you believe me, I fancy my expressions have not been entirely unfaithful to my thoughts.

May your faith be encreased in all truths that are as great as this; and, depend upon it, to whatever degree it may extend, you never can be a bigot.

If you could see the heart I talk of, you would really think it a foolish good kind of thing, with some qualities as well deserving to be half-laugh'd at, and half-esteem'd, as most hearts in the world.

Its grand *foible* in regard to you, is the most like reason of any *foible* in nature. Upon my word this

heart is not like a great warehouse, stor'd only with my own goods, or with empty spaces to be supplied as fast as interest or ambition can fill them: but is every inch of it let out into lodgings for its friends, and shall never want a corner where your idea will always ly as warm, and as close as any idea in Christendom.

If this distance (as you are so kind as to say) enlarges your belief of my friendship, I assure you it has so extended my notion of your value, that I begin to be impious upon that account, and to wish that even slaughter, ruin, and desolation may interpose between you and the place you design for; and that you were restored to us at the expence of a whole people.

Is there no expedient to return you in peace to the bosom of your country? I hear you are come as far as — : do you only look back to die twice? is Eurydice once more snatched to the shades? If ever mortal had reason to hate the King, it is I, whose particular misfortune it is to be almost the only innocent person he has made to suffer, both by his government at home, and his negotiations abroad.

If you must go from us, I wish at least you might pass to your banishment by the most pleasant way; that all the road might be roses and myrtles, and a thousand objects rise round you, agreeable enough to make England less desirable to you. It is not now my interest to wish England agreeable: it is highly probable it may use me ill enough to drive me from it. Can I think that place my country, where I cannot now call a foot of paternal earth my own? Yet it may seem some alleviation, that when the wisest thing I can do is to leave my country,

what was most agreeable in it should first be snatched away from it.

I could overtake you with pleasure in —, and make that tour in your company. Every reasonable entertainment and beautiful view would be doubly engaging when you partook of it. I should at least attend you to the sea coasts, and cast a last look after the sails that transported you. But perhaps I might care as little to stay behind you; and be full as uneasy to live in a country where I saw others persecuted by the rogues of my own religion, as where I was persecuted myself by the rogues of yours. And it is not impossible I might run into Asia in search of liberty; for who would not rather live a freeman among a nation of slaves, than a slave among a nation of freemen?

In good earnest, if I knew your motions, and your exact time, I verily think I should be once more happy in a sight of you next Spring.

I'll conclude with a wish, God send you with us, or me with you.

L E T T E R XXII.

YOU will find me more troublesome than ever Brutus did his evil genius; I shall meet you in more places than one, and often refresh your memory before you arrive at your Philippi. These shadows of me (my letters) will be haunting you from time to time, and putting you in mind of the man who has really suffered very much from you, and whom you have robbed of the most valuable of his enjoyments, your conversation. The advantage of hearing your sentiments by discovering mine, was

what I always thought a great one, and even worth the risk I generally run of manifesting my own indiscretion. You then rewarded my trust in you the moment it was given, for you pleased or informed me the minute you answered. I must now be contented with more slow returns. However, 'tis some pleasure, that your thoughts upon paper will be a more lasting possession to me, and that I shall no longer have cause to complain of a loss I have so often regretted, that of any thing you said, which I happened to forget. In earnest, Madam, if I were to write to you as often as I think of you, it must be every day of my life. I attend you in spirit through all your ways, I follow you through every stage in books of travels, and fear for you through whole folios: you make me shrink at the past dangers of dead travellers; and if I read of a delightful prospect, or agreeable place, I hope it yet subsists to please you. I enquire the roads, the amusements, the company, of every town and country through which you pass, with as much diligence, as if I were to set out next week to overtake you. In a word, no one can have you more constantly in mind, not even your guardian angel, (if you have one) and I am willing to indulge so much Popery as to fancy some Being takes care of you, who knows your value better than you do yourself; I am willing to think that Heaven never gave so much self-neglect and resolution to a woman, to occasion her calamity; but am pious enough to believe those qualities must be intended to conduce to her benefit and her glory.

Your first short letter only serves to shew me you are alive: it puts me in mind of the first dove that

returned to Noah, and just made him know it had found no rest abroad.

There is nothing in it that pleases me, but when you tell me you had no sea-sickness. I beg your next may give me all the pleasure it can, that is, tell me any that you receive. You can make no discoveries that will be half so valuable to me as those of your own mind. Nothing that regards the states or kingdoms you pass through, will engage so much of my curiosity or concern, as what relates to yourself: your welfare, to say truth, is more at my heart than that of Christendom.

I am sure I may defend the truth, though perhaps not the virtue of this declaration. One is ignorant, or doubtful at best, of the merits of differing religions and governments; but private virtues one can be sure of. I therefore know what particular person has desert enough to merit being happier than others, but not what nation deserves to conquer or oppress another. You will say I am not *public-spirited*; let it be so, I may have too many tenderneesses, particular regards, or narrow views; but at the same time I am certain that whoever wants these, can never have a public spirit; for (as a friend of mine says) how is it possible for that man to love twenty thousand people, who never loved one?

I communicated your letter to Mr C—. He thinks of you and talks of you as he ought, I mean as I do, and one always thinks that to be just as it ought. His health and mine are now so good, that we wish with all our souls you were a witness of it. We never meet but we lament over you: we pay a kind of weekly rites to your memory, where we strow flowers of rhetoric, and offer such libations to your

same as it would be prophane to call toasting. The Duke of B——m is sometimes the high-priest of your praises; and upon the whole, I believe there are as few men that are not sorry at your departure, as women that are; for, you know, most of your sex want good sense, and therefore must want generosity: you have so much of both, that, I am sure, you pardon them; for one cannot but forgive whatever one despises. For my part, I hate a great many women for your sake, and undervalue all the rest. 'Tis you are to blame, and may God revenge it upon you, with all those blessings and earthly prosperities which, the divines tell us, are the cause of our perdition; for if he makes you happy in this world, I dare trust your own virtue to do it in the other. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

To Mrs ARABELLA FERMOR,

On her Marriage.

YOU are by this time satisfied how much the tenderness of one man of merit is to be preferred to the addresses of a thousand. And by this time the gentleman you have made choice of is sensible, how great is the joy of having all those charms and good qualities which have pleased so many, now applied to please one only. It was but just, that the same virtues which gave you reputation, should give you happiness; and I can wish you no greater, than that you may receive it in as high a degree yourself, as so much good humour must infallibly give it to your husband.

It may be expected, perhaps, that one who has the title of Poet should say something more polite on this occasion; but I am really more a well-wisher to your felicity, than a celebrater of your beauty. Besides, you are now a married woman, and in a way to be a great many better things than a fine lady; such as an excellent wife, a faithful friend, a tender parent, and, at last, as the consequence of them all, a saint in heaven. You ought now to hear nothing but that which was all you ever desired to hear, (whatever others may have spoken to you), I mean truth: and it is with the utmost that I assure you, no friend you have can more rejoice in any good that befalls you, is more sincerely delighted with the prospect of your future happiness, or more unfeignedly desires a long continuance of it.

I hope you will think it but just, that a man who will certainly be spoken of as your admirer after he is dead, may have the happiness to be esteemed, while he is living,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R S

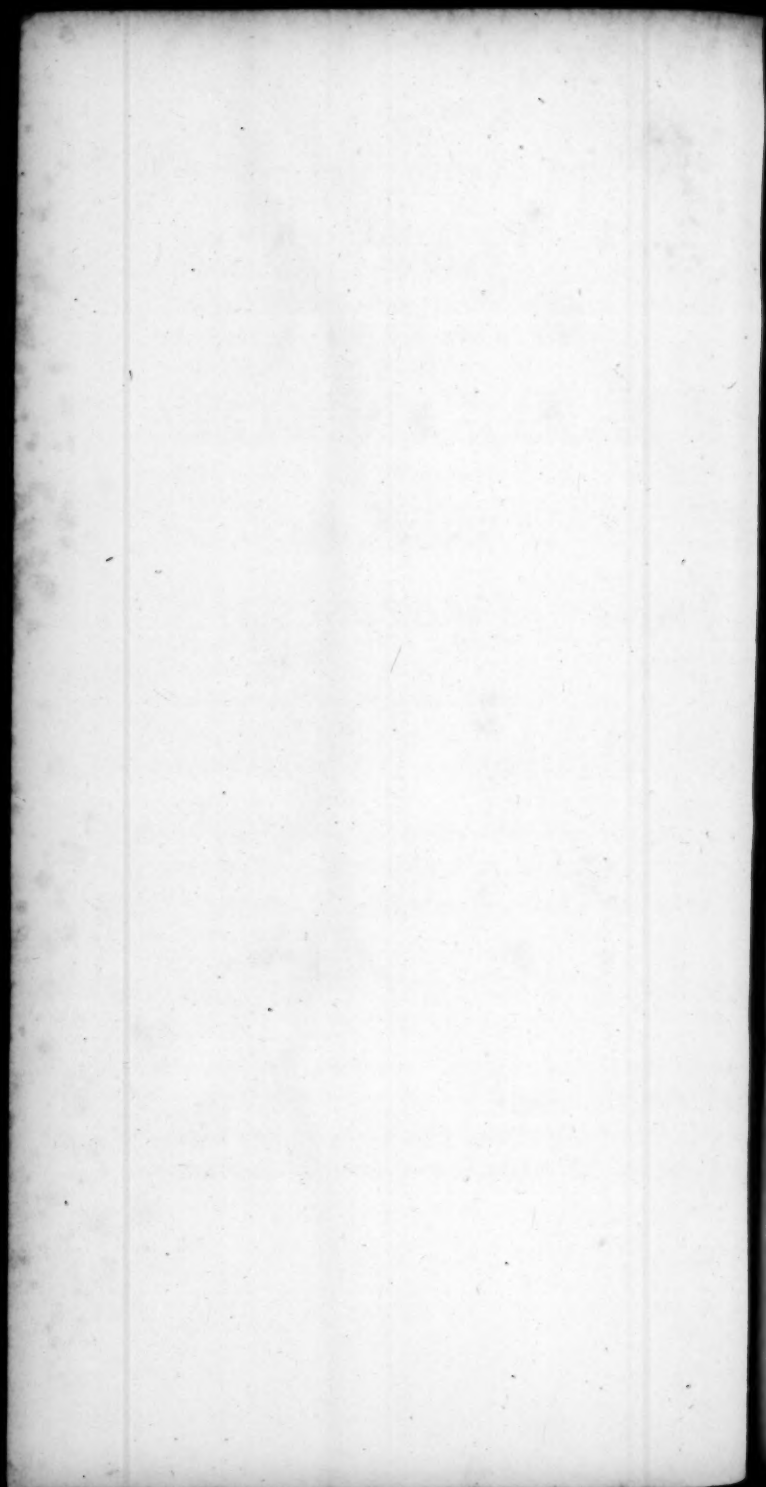
T O A N D F R O M

Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL.

From the Year 1705, to 1716.

VOL. VI.

R



L E T T E R S

TO AND FROM

Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL*.

L E T T E R I.

Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL to Mr POPE.

S I R,

October 19, 1705.

I RETURN you the book you were pleased to send me, and with it your obliging letter, which deserves my particular acknowledgment; for, next to the pleasure of enjoying the company of so good a friend, the welcomest thing to me is to hear from him. I expected to find, what I have met with, an admirable genius in those poems, not only because they were Milton's †, or were approved by Sir Hen. Wotton, but because you had commended them; and give me leave to tell you, that I know nobody so like to equal him, even at the age he wrote most of them, as yourself: only do not afford more cause of complaints against you, that you suffer nothing of yours to come abroad; which in this age, wherein wit and true sense is more scarce than money, is a

* Secretary of State to King William III.

† L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Lycidas, and the Mask of Comus.

piece of such cruelty as your best friends can hardly pardon. I hope you will repent and amend; I could offer many reasons to this purpose, and such as you cannot answer with any sincerity; but that I dare not enlarge, for fear of engaging in a style of compliment which has been so abused by fools and knaves, that it is become almost scandalous. I conclude, therefore, with an assurance which shall never vary, of my being ever, &c.

LETTER II.

Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL to Mr POPE.

April 9, 1708.

I HAVE this moment received the favour of yours of the 8th instant; and will make you a true excuse, (though perhaps no very good one) that I deferred the troubling you with a letter, when I sent back your papers, in hopes of seeing you at Binfield before this time. If I had met with any fault in your performance, I should freely now (as I have done too presumptuously in conversation with you) tell you my opinion; which I have frequently ventured to give you, rather in compliance with your desires, than that I could think it reasonable: for I am not yet satisfied upon what grounds I can pretend to judge of poetry, who never have been practised in the art. There may possibly be some happy geniuses, who may judge of some of the natural beauties of a poem, as a man may of the proportions of a building, without having read Vitruvius, or knowing any thing of the rules of architecture; but this, tho' it may sometimes be in the right, must be subject to many mistakes, and is certainly but a superficial

knowledge, without entering into the art, the methods, and the particular excellencies of the whole composition, in all the parts of it.

Besides my want of skill, I have another reason why I ought to suspect myself, by reason of the great affection I have for you; which might give too much bias to be kind to every thing that comes from you. But, after all, I must say, (and I do it with an old-fashioned sincerity) that I entirely approve of your translation of those pieces of Homer, both as to the versification and the true sense that shines through the whole: nay, I am confirmed in my former application to you, and give me leave to renew it upon this occasion, that you would proceed in translating that incomparable Poet, to make him speak good English, to dress his admirable characters in your proper, significant, and expressive conceptions, and to make his works as useful and instructive to this degenerate age, as he was to our friend Horace, when he read him at Preneste: "*Qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,*" &c. I break off with that *quid non?* with which, I confess, I am charmed.

Upon the whole matter, I entreat you to send this presently to be added to the Miscellanies, and I hope it will come time enough for that purpose.

I have nothing to say of my nephew B.'s observations, for he sent them to me so late, that I had not time to consider them; I dare say he endeavoured very faithfully (though, he told me, very hastily) to execute your commands.

All I can add is, that if your excess of modesty should hinder you from publishing this Essay, I shall

only be sorry that I have no more credit with you, to persuade you to oblige the public, and very particularly, dear Sir,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R III.

Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL to Mr POPE.

March 6, 1713.

I THINK a hasty scribble shows more what flows from the heart, than a letter after Balzac's manner in studied phrases; therefore I will tell you as fast as I can, that I have received your favour of the 26th past, with your kind present of the Rape of the Lock. You have given me the truest satisfaction imaginable, not only in making good the just opinion I have ever had of your reach of thought, and my idea of your comprehensive genius; but likewise in that pleasure I take, as an Englishman, to see the French, even Boileau himself in his *Lutrin*, outdone in your poem: for you descend *leviore plectro*, to all the nicer touches that your own observation and wit furnish on such a subject as requires the finest strokes and the liveliest imagination. But I must say no more (though I could a great deal) on what pleases me so much; and henceforth, I hope, you will never condemn me of partiality, since I only swim with the stream, and approve of what all men of good taste (notwithstanding the jarring of parties) must and do universally applaud. I now come to what is of vast moment, I mean the preservation of your health, and beg of you earnestly to get out of all tavern-company, and fly away *tanquam ex incendio*. What a misery is it for you to be destroyed by the foolish kindness ('tis all one whether real or pretended) of those who are

able to bear the poison of bad wine, and to engage you in so unequal a combat! As to Homer, by all I can learn, your business is done: therefore come away, and take a little time to breathe in the country. I beg now for my own sake, and much more for yours. Methinks Mr — has said to you more than once,

“Heu fuge, nate dea, teque his, ait, eripe flammis!”

I am,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R IV.

To Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL.

March 12, 1713.

THOUGH any thing you write is sure to be a pleasure to me, yet I must own your last letter made me uneasy; you really use a style of compliment which I expect as little as I deserve it. I know 'tis a common opinion that a young scribbler is as ill pleased to hear truth as a young lady. From the moment one sets up for an author, one must be treated as ceremoniously, that is, as unfaithfully

“As a king's favourite, or as a king.”

This proceeding, joined to that natural vanity which first makes a man an author, is certainly enough to render him a coxcomb for life. But I must grant it is a just judgment upon poets, that they, whose chief pretence is wit, should be treated as they themselves treat fools, that is, be cajoled with praises: and I believe poets are the only poor fellows in the world whom anybody will flatter.

I would not be thought to say this, as if the obliging letter you sent me deserved this imputation, only it put me in mind of it; and I fancy one may ap-

ply to one's friend, what Cæsar said of his wife : " It was not sufficient that he knew her to be chaste himself, but she should not be so much as suspected."

As to the wonderful discoveries, and all the good news you are pleased to tell me of myself, I treat it as you, who are in the secret, treat common news, as groundless reports of things at a distance; which I, who look into the true springs of the affair, in my own breast, know to have no foundation at all: for Fame, though it be (as Milton finely calls it) " the last infirmity of noble minds," is scarce so strong a temptation as to warrant our loss of time here: it can never make us ly down contentedly on a death-bed, (as some of the Ancients are said to have done with that thought.) You, Sir, have yourself taught me, that an easy situation at that hour can proceed from no ambition less noble than that of an eternal felicity, which is unattainable by the strongest endeavours of the wit, but may be gained by the sincere intentions of the heart only. As in the next world, so in this, the only solid blessings are owing to the goodness of the mind, not the extent of the capacity. Friendship here is an emanation from the same source as beatitude there: the same benevolence and grateful disposition that qualifies us for the one, if extended farther, makes us partakers of the other. The utmost point of my desires in my present state terminates in the society and good-will of worthy men, which I look upon as no ill earnest and foretaste of the society and alliance of happy souls hereafter.

The continuance of your favours to me is what not only makes me happy, but causes me to set some

value upon myself as a part of your care. The instances I daily meet with of these agreeable awakenings of friendship, are of too pleasing a nature not to be acknowledged whenever I think of you.

I am

Your, &c.

L E T T E R V.

April 30, 1713.

I HAVE been almost every day employed in following your advice, and amusing myself in painting, in which I am most particularly obliged to Mr Jervas, who gives me daily instructions and examples. As to poetical affairs, I am content at present to be a bare looker-on, and from a practitioner turn an admirer, which is (as the world goes) not very usual. Cato was not so much the wonder of Rome in his days, as he is of Britain in ours; and though all the foolish industry possible has been used to make it thought a party-play, yet what the author once said of another may, the most properly in the world, be applied to him on this occasion:

“ Envy itself is dumb, in wonder lost,

“ And factions strive who shall applaud him most.”

The numerous and violent claps of the Whig-party on the one side of the theatre, were echoed back by the Tories on the other; while the author sweated behind the scenes with concern to find their applause proceeding more from the hand than the head. This was the case too of the prologue writer*, who was clapped into a staunch Whig at almost every two lines. I believe you have heard,

* Himself.

that after all the applauses of the opposite faction, my Lord Belingbroke sent for Booth, who played Cato, into the box, between one of the acts, and presented him with fifty guineas; in acknowledgment (as he expressed it) for defending the cause of Liberty so well against a perpetual dictator. The Whigs are unwilling to be distanced this way, and therefore design a present to the same Cato very speedily; in the mean time they are getting ready as good a sentence as the former on their side: so betwixt them 'tis probable that Cato (as Dr Garth expressed it) may have something to live upon after he dies.

I am

Your, &c.

LETTER VI.

From Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL.

Easthamstead, Feb. 22, 1714.-15.

I AM sensibly obliged, dear Sir, by your kind present of the Temple of Fame, into which you are already entered, and I dare prophecy for once (tho' I am not much given to it) that you will continue there, with those,

“ Who, ever new, not subject to decays,

“ Spread and grow brighter with the length of days.”

There was nothing wanting to compleat your obliging remembrance of me, but your accompanying it with your poem; your long absence being much the severest part of the winter. I am truly sorry that your time, which you can employ so much better, should be spent in the drudgery of correcting the printers; for as to what you have done yourself, there will nothing of that nature be necessary. I wish you

could find a few minutes leisure to let me hear from you sometimes, and to acquaint me how your Homer draws on towards a publication, and all things relating thereunto.

I intreat you to return my humble service to Mr Jervas. I still flatter myself that he will take an opportunity, in a proper season, to see us, and review his picture, and then to alter some things, so as to please himself; which I know will not be till every thing in it is perfect; no more than I can be, till you believe me to be with that sincerity and esteem that I am, and will ever continue, your most faithful friend.

L E T T E R VII.

December 16, 1715.

IT was one of the enigmas of Pythagoras, "When the winds rise, worship the echo." A modern writer explains this to signify, "When popular tumults begin, retire to solitudes, or such places where echoes are commonly found, rocks, woods," &c. I am rather of opinion it should be interpreted, "When rumours encrease, and when there is abundance of noise and clamour, believe the second report." This, I think, agrees more exactly with the echo, and is the more natural application of the symbol. However it be, either of these precepts is extremely proper to be followed at this season; and I cannot but applaud your resolution of continuing in what you call your Cave in the Forest, this winter; and preferring the noise of breaking ice, to that of breaking statesmen, the rage of storms to that of parties, the fury and ravage of floods and tempests, to

the precipitancy of some, and the ruin of others, which, I fear, will be our daily prospects in London.

I sincerely wish myself with you, to contemplate the wonders of God in the firmament, rather than the madness of man on the earth : but I never had so much cause as now to complain of my poetical star, that fixes me, at this tumultuous time, to attend the gingling of rhymes and the measuring of syllables : to be almost the only trifler in the nation ; and as ridiculous as the poet in Petronius, who, while all the rest in the ship were either labouring or praying for life, was scratching his head in a little room, to write a fine description of the tempest.

You tell me, you like the sound of no arms but those of Achilles ; for my part, I like them as little as any other arms. I listed myself in the battles of Homer, and I am no sooner in war, but, like most other folks, I wish myself out again.

I heartily join with you in wishing quiet to our native country : quiet in the state, which, like charity in religion, is too much the perfection and happiness of either, to be broken or violated on any pretence or prospect whatsoever. Fire and sword, and fire and faggot, are equally my aversion. I can pray for opposite parties, and for opposite religions, with great sincerity. I think to be a lover of one's country is a glorious elogy, but I do not think it so great a one as to be a lover of mankind.

I sometimes celebrate you under these denominations, and join your health with that of the whole world ; a truly catholic health, which far excels the poor narrow-spirited, ridiculous healths now in fashion, to this church, or that church. Whatever our teachers may say, they must give us leave at

least to wish generously. These, dear Sir, are my general dispositions; but whenever I pray or wish for particulars, you are one of the first in the thoughts and affections of

Your, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

From Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL.

Jan. 19, 1715, -16.

I SHOULD be ashamed of my long idleness, in not acknowledging your kind advice about Echo, and your most ingenious explanation of it relating to popular tumults, which I own to be very useful: and yet give me leave to tell you, that I keep myself to a shorter receipt of the same Pythagoras, which is Silence; and this I shall observe, if not the whole time of his discipline, yet at least till your return into this country. I am obliged further to this method, by the most severe weather I ever felt; when, though I keep as near by the fire-side as may be, yet *gelidus concrevit frigore sanguis*; and often I apprehend the circulation of the blood begins to be stopped. I have further great losses (to a poor farmer) of my poor oxen—*intercunt pecudes, stant circumfusa pruinis Corpora magna boum*, &c.

Pray comfort me, if you can, by telling me that your second volume of Homer is not frozen; for it must be expressed very poetically, to say now, that the presses sweat.

I cannot forbear to add a piece of artifice I have been guilty of, on occasion of my being obliged to congratulate the birth-day of a friend of mine; when finding I had no materials of my own, I very frankly sent him your imitation of Martial's epigram on

Antonius Primus *. This has been applauded so much, that I am in danger of commencing poet, perhaps laureat, (pray desire my good friend Mr Rowe to enter a caveat), provided you will farther increase my stock in this bank: in which proceeding I have laid the foundation of my estate, and as honestly as many others have begun theirs. But now being a little fearful, as young beginners often are, I offer to you (for I have concealed the true author) whether you will give me orders to declare who is the father of this fine child or not? Whatever you determine, my fingers, pen and ink are so frozen, that I cannot thank you more at large. You will forgive this and all other faults of, Dear Sir,

Your, &c.

* *Jam numerat placido felix Antonius aeo, &c.*

At length my Friend (while Time with still career
 Wafts on his gentle wing his eightieth year)
 Sees his past days safe out of Fortune's pow'r,
 Nor dreads approaching Fate's uncertain hour;
 Reviews his life, and in the strict survey
 Finds not one moment he could wish away,
 Pleas'd with the series of each happy day.
 Such, such a man extends his life's short space,
 And from the goal again renews the race:
 For he lives twice, who can at once employ
 The present well, and ev'n the past enjoy.

L E T T E R S

T O A N D F R O M

S E V E R A L P E R S O N S .

From the Year 1711, to 1714.

L E T T E R S
TO AND FROM
SEVERAL PERSONS.

L E T T E R I.

To the Hon. J. C. Esq.

June 15, 1711.

I SEND you Dennis's remarks on the Essay *, which equally abound in just criticisms and fine railleries. The few observations in my hand in the margins, are what a morning's leisure permitted me to make purely for your perusal: for I am of opinion that such a critic, as you will find him by the latter part of his book, is but one way to be properly answered, and that way I would not take after what he informs me in his preface, that he is at this time persecuted by Fortune. This I knew not before; if I had, his name had been spared in the Essay, for that only reason. I can't conceive what ground he has for so excessive a resentment; nor imagine how these three lines † can be called a reflection on his person, which only describe him subject a little to anger on some occasions. I have heard of combatants so very furious, as to fall down themselves with

* On Criticism.

† But Appius reddens at each word you speak,
And stares tremendous with a threat'ning eye,
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.

that very blow which they designed to lay heavy on their antagonists: but if Mr Dennis's rage proceeds only from a zeal to discourage young and unexperienced writers from scribbling, he should frighten us with his verse, not prose: for I have often known, that, when all the precepts in the world would not reclaim a sinner, some very sad example has done the business. Yet, to give this man his due, he has objected to one or two lines with reason, and I will alter them in case of another edition; I will make my enemy do me a kindness where he meant an injury, and so serve instead of a friend. What he observes at the bottom of page xxth of his Reflections, was objected to by yourself, and had been mended but for the haste of the press: I confess it is what the English call a Bull, in the expression, though the sense be manifest enough: Mr Dennis's bulls are seldom in the expression, they are generally in the sense.

I shall certainly never make the least reply to him; not only because you advise me, but because I have ever been of opinion, that if a book can't answer for itself to the public, 'tis to no sort of purpose for its author to do it. If I am wrong in any sentiment of that Essay, I protest sincerely I don't desire all the world should be deceived (which would be of very ill consequence) merely that I myself may be thought right (which is of very little consequence.) I would be the first to recant, for the benefit of others, and the glory of myself; for (as I take it) when a man owns himself to have been in an error, he does but tell you in other words, that he is wiser than he was. But I have had an advantage by the publishing that Book, which otherwise I should never have known;

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it has been the occasion of making me friends and open abettors, of several gentlemen of known sense and wit; and of proving to me what I have till now doubted, that my writings are taken some notice of by the world, or I should never be attacked thus in particular. I have read that 'twas a custom among the Romans, while a General rode in triumph, to have the common soldiers in the streets that railed at him and reproached him; to put him in mind, that tho' his services were in the main approved and rewarded, yet he had faults enough to keep him humble.

You will see by this, that whoever sets up for wit in these days, ought to have the constancy of a primitive Christian, and be prepared to suffer martyrdom in the cause of it: but sure this is the first time that a wit was attacked for his Religion, as you'll find I am most zealously in his Treatise; and you know, Sir, what alarms I have had from the * opposite side on this account. Have I not reason to cry out with the poor fellow in Virgil,

“ Quid jam misero mihi denique restat?

“ Cui neque apud Danaos usquam locus, et super ipsi

“ Dardanidæ infensi pænas cum sanguine poscunt.”

'Tis however my happiness that you, Sir, are impartial,

Jove was alike to Latian and to Phrygian,

For you well know, that wit's of no Religion.

The manner in which Mr D. takes to pieces several particular lines, detached from their natural places, may shew how easy it is to a caviller to give a new sense or a new nonsense to any thing: and indeed his constructions are not more wrested from the ge-

* See the ensuing Letter.

nuine meaning, than theirs who objected to the heterodox parts, as they called them.

Our friend the Abbe is not of that sort, who with the utmost candour and freedom has modestly told me what others thought, and shewn himself one (as he very well expresses it) rather of a number than a party. The only difference between us in relation to the Monks, is that he thinks most sorts of learning flourished among them, and I am of opinion that only some sort of learning was barely kept alive by them. He believes that in the most natural and obvious sense, that line (*A second deluge learning over-run*) will be understood of learning in general; and I fancy 'twill be understood only (as 'tis meant) of polite learning, criticism, poetry, &c. which is the only learning concerned in the subject of the Essay. It is true, that the Monks did preserve what learning there was, about Nicholas the Fifth's time; but those who succeeded fell into the depth of barbarism, or at least stood at a stay, while others arose from thence, in so much that even Erasmus and Reuchlin could hardly laugh them out of it. I am highly obliged to the Abbe's zeal in my commendation, and goodness in not concealing what he thinks my error: and his testifying some esteem for the book, just at a time when his brethren rais'd a clamour against it, is an instance of great generosity and candour, which I shall ever acknowledge.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R II.

To the SAME.

June 18, 1717.

I N your last you informed me of the mistaken zeal of some people, who seem to make it no less their business to persuade men they are erroneous, than doctors do that they are sick; only that they may magnify their own cure, and triumph over an imaginary distemper. The simile objected to in my Essay,

(Thus wit, like faith, by each man is apply'd

To one small sect, and all are damn'd beside,)

plainly concludes at this second line, where stands a full stop: and what follows (*Meanly they seek, &c.*) speaks only of wit (which is meant by that blessing, and that fun); for how can the sum of faith be said to sublime the southern wits, and to ripen the geniuses of northern climates? I fear these gentlemen understand grammar as little as they do criticism: and, perhaps, out of good nature to the Monks, are willing to take from them the censure of ignorance, and to have it to themselves. The word *they* refers (as I am sure I meant, and as I thought every one must have known) to those critics there spoken of, who are partial to some particular set of writers, to the prejudice of all others: and the very simile itself, if twice read, may convince them that the censure here of damning lyes not on our church at all, unless they call our church *one small sect*: and the cautious words (*by each man*) manifestly shew it a general reflection on all such (whoever they are) who entertain those narrow and limited notions of

the mercy of the Almighty ; which the Reformed ministers and Presbyterians are as guilty of as any people living.

Yet, after all, I promise you, Sir, if the alteration of a word or two will gratify any man of sound faith, though weak understanding, I will (though it were from no other principle than that of common good-nature) comply with it : and if you please but to particularize the spot where their objection lyes (for it is in a very narrow compass) that stumbling-block, though it be but a little pebble, shall be removed out of their way. If the heat of these good disputants (who, I am afraid, being bred up to wrangle in the schools, cannot get rid of the humour all their lives) should proceed so far as to personal reflections upon me, I assure you, notwithstanding, I will do or say nothing, however provoked, (for some people can no more provoke than oblige) that is unbecoming the true character of a Catholic. I will set before me the example of that great man, and great saint, Erasmus ; who, in the midst of calumny, proceeded with all the calmness of innocence, and the unrevenging spirit of primitive Christianity. However, I would advise them to suffer the mention of him to pass unregarded, lest I should be forced to do that for his reputation, which I would never do for my own ; I mean, to vindicate so great a light of our church from the malice of past times, and the ignorance of the present, in a language which may extend farther than that in which the trifle about criticism is written. I wish these gentlemen would be contented with finding fault with me only, who will submit to them right or wrong, as far as I only am concerned : I have a greater regard

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to the quiet of mankind than to disturb it for things of so little consequence as my credit and my sense. A little humility can do a poet no hurt, and a little charity would do a priest none; for, as St Austin finely says, *Ubi charitas, ibi humilitas, ubi humilitas, ibi pax.*

Your, &c.

L E T T E R III.

To the SAME.

July 19, 1711.

THE concern which you more than seem to be affected with for my reputation, by the several accounts you have so obligingly given of what reports and censures the holy Vandals have thought fit to pass upon me, makes me desirous of telling so good a friend my whole thoughts of this matter, and of setting before you, in a clear light, the true state of it.

I have ever believed the best piece of service one could do to our religion, was openly to express our detestation and scorn of all those mean artifices and *pie fraudes*, which it stands so little in need of, and which have laid it under so great a scandal among its enemies.

Nothing has been so much a scarecrow to them, as that too peremptory and uncharitable assertion of an utter impossibility of salvation to all but ourselves, invincible ignorance excepted; which indeed some people define under so great limitations, and with such exclusions, that it seems as if that word were rather invented as a salvo, or expedient, not to be thought too bold with the thunderbolts of God, (which are hurled about so freely on almost all man-

kind by the hands of ecclesiastics) than as a real exception to almost universal damnation : for besides the small number of the truly faithful in our Church, we must again subdivide ; the Jansenist is damned by the Jesuit, the Jesuit by the Jansenist, the Scotist by the Thomist, and so forth.

There may be errors, I grant ; but I can't think them of such consequence as to destroy utterly the charity of mankind, the very greatest bond in which we are engaged by God to one another : therefore, I own to you, I was glad of any opportunity to express my dislike of so shocking a sentiment as those of the religion I profess are commonly charged with ; and I hoped a slight insinuation, introduced so easily by a casual similitude only, could never have given offence, but, on the contrary, must needs have done good, in a nation and time wherein we are the smaller party, and consequently most misrepresented, and most in need of vindication.

For the same reason, I took occasion to mention the superstition of some ages after the subversion of the Roman Empire, which is too manifest a truth to be denied, and does in no sort reflect upon the present professors of our faith, who are free from it. Our silence in these points may, with some reason, make our adversaries think we allow and persist in those bigotries ; which yet in reality all good and sensible men despise, tho' they are persuaded not to speak against them, I can't tell why, since now 'tis no way the interest even of the worst of our priesthood (as it might have been then) to have them smothered in silence : for as the opposite sects are now prevailing, 'tis too late to hinder our Church from being slandered ; 'tis our business now to vindicate

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state ourselves from being thought abettors of what they charge us with. This can't so well be brought about with serious faces; we must laugh with them at what deserves it, or be content to be laugh'd at with such as deserve it.

As to particulars; you cannot but have observed, that at the first the whole objection against the simile of Wit and Faith lay to the word *They*: when that was beyond contradiction removed (the very grammar serving to confute them) then the objection was against the simile itself; or if that simile will not be objected to (sense and common reason being indeed a little stubborn, and not apt to give way to every body) next the mention of Superstition must become a crime; as if Religion and she were sisters, or that it were scandal upon the family of Christ, to say a word against the devil's bastard. Afterwards, more mischief is discover'd in a place that seem'd innocent at first, the two lines about *Schismatics*. An ordinary man would imagine the author plainly declared against those schismatics, for quitting the true faith out of a contempt of the understanding of some few of its believers; but these believers are called *dull*, and because I say that those schismatics think some believers dull, therefore these charitable interpreters of my meaning will have it that I think all believers dull. I was lately telling Mr ** these objections: who assured me I had said nothing which a Catholic need to disown; and I have cause to know that gentleman's fault (if he has any) is not want of zeal. He put a notion into my head, which, I confess, I can't but acquiesce in; that when a set of people are piqued at any truth which they think to their own disadvantage, their method of revenge on the truth-

speaker is, to attack his reputation a by-way, and not openly to object to the place they are really galled by: what these, therefore, (in his opinion) are in earnest angry at, is that *Erasmus*, whom their tribe oppressed and persecuted, should be vindicated after an age of obloquy by one of their own people, willing to utter an honest truth in behalf of the dead, whom no man sure will flatter, and to whom few will do justice. Others, you know, were as angry that I mentioned Mr *Walsh* with honour; who, as he never refused to any one of merit, of any party, the praise due to him, so honestly deserved it from all others, though of ever so different interests or sentiments. May I be ever guilty of this sort of liberty and latitude of principle! which gives us the hardness of speaking well of those whom Envy oppresses even after death. As I would always speak well of my living friends when they are absent, nay, because they are absent; so would I much more of the dead, in that eternal absence; and the rather, because I expect no thanks for it.

Thus, Sir, you see I do in my conscience persist in what I have written; yet in my friendship I will recant and alter whatever you please, in case of a second edition (which I think the book will not soon arrive at, for *Tonson's* printer told me he threw off n thousand copies in this first impression, and I fancy a treatise of this nature, which not one gentleman in threescore, even of a liberal education, can understand, can hardly exceed the vent of that number.) You shall find me a true Trojan in my faith and friendship, in both which I will persevere to the end,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R IV.

To my Lord LANSDOWNE.

Binfield, Jan. 10, 1712.

I THANK you for having given my poem of Windsor-Forest its greatest ornament, that of bearing your name in the front of it. 'Tis one thing when a person of true merit permits us to have the honour of drawing him as like as we can, and another when we make a fine thing at random, and persuade the next vain creature we can find that 'tis his own likeness; which is the case every day of my fellow-scribblers. Yet, my Lord, this honour has given me no more pride than your honours have given you; but it affords me a great deal of pleasure, which is much better than a great deal of pride; and it indeed would give me some pain, if I was not sure of one advantage; that whereas others are offended if they have not more than justice done them, you would be displeased if you had so much: therefore I may safely do you as much injury in my word, as you do yourself in your own thoughts. I am so vain as to think I have shewn you a favour, in sparing your modesty, and you cannot but make me some return for prejudizing the truth to gratify you: this I beg may be the free correction of these verses, which will have few beauties, but what may be made by your blots. I am in the circumstance of an ordinary painter drawing Sir Godfrey Kneller, who by a few touches of his own could make the piece very valuable. I might then hope, that many

years Lence the world might read, in conjunction with your name, that of

Your Lordship's, &c.

L E T T E R V.

The Hon. J. C. to Mr. P O P E.

May 23, 1712.

I AM very glad, for the sake of the widow, and for the credit of the deceased, that * Betterton's remains are fallen into such hands as may render them reputable to the one, and beneficial to the other. Besides the public acquaintance I long had with that poor man, I also had a slender knowledge of his parts and capacity by private conversation, and ever thought it pity he was necessitated, by the straitness of his fortune, to act (and especially to his latest hours) an imaginary and fictitious part, who was capable of exhibiting a real one with credit to himself, and advantage to his neighbour.

I hope your health permitted you to execute your design of giving us an imitation of Pollio; I am satisfied 'twill be doubly divine, and I shall long to see it. I ever thought church-music the most ravishing of all harmonious compositions, and must also believe sacred subjects, well handled, the most inspiring of all poetry.

But where hangs the *Lock* now (though I know that rather than draw any just reflection upon yourself of the least shadow of ill-nature, you would

* A Translation of some part of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, the Prologues, &c. printed in a Miscellany with some Works of Pope, in two volumes 12mo, by B. Lintot.

freely have suppressed one of the best of poems.) I hear no more of it—will it come out in Lintot's Miscellany or not? I wrote to Lord Petre upon the subject of the Lock, some time since, but have as yet had no answer, nor indeed do I know when he'll be in London. I have, since I saw you, corresponded with Mrs W. I hope she is now with her aunt, and that her journey thither was something facilitated by my writing to that lady as pressingly as possible, not to let any thing whatsoever obstruct it. I sent her obliging answer to the party it most concerned; and when I hear Mrs W. is certainly there, I will write again to my Lady to urge as much as possible the effecting the only thing that in my opinion can make her niece easy. I have run out my extent of paper, and am

Your, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

The ANSWER.

May 28, 1712.

IT is not only the disposition I always have of conversing with you, that makes me so speedily answer your obliging letter, but the apprehension lest your charitable intent of writing to my Lady A. on Mrs W.'s affair should be frustrated, by the short stay she makes there. She went thither on the 25th, with that mixture of expectation and anxiety with which people usually go into unknown or half discovered countries, utterly ignorant of the dispositions of the inhabitants, and the treatment they are to meet with. The unfortunate, of all people, are the most unfit to be left alone; yet, we see, the

world generally takes care they shall be so: whereas, if we took a considerate prospect of the world, the business and study of the happy and easy should be to divert and humour, as well as comfort and pity, the distressed. I cannot therefore excuse some near allies of mine for their conduct of late towards this lady, which has given me a great deal of anger as well as sorrow: all I shall say to you of them at present is, that they have not been my relations these two months. The consent of opinions in our minds, is certainly a nearer tie than can be contracted by all the blood in our bodies; and I am proud of finding I have something congenial with you. Will you permit me to confess to you, that all the favours and kind offices you have shewn towards me, have not so strongly cemented me yours, as the discovery of that generous and manly compassion you manifested in the case of this unhappy lady? I am afraid to insinuate to you how much I esteem you: flatterers have taken up the style which was once peculiar to friends, and an honest man has now no way left to express himself besides the common one of knaves: so that true friends now a-days differ in their address from flatterers, as much as right mastiffs do from spaniels, and show themselves by a dumb surly sort of fidelity, rather than by a complaisant and open kindness.—Will you never leave commending my poetry? In fair truth, Sir, I like it but too well myself already: expose me no more, I beg you, to the great danger of vanity, (the rock of all men, but most of young men), and be kindly content for the future, when you would please me thoroughly, to say only you like what I write.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

Dec. 5, 1712.

YOU have at length complied with the request I have often made you, for you have shown me, I must confess, several of my faults in the sight of those letters. Upon a review of them, I find many things that would give me shame, if I were not more desirous to be thought honest than prudent; so many things freely thrown out, such lengths of unreserved friendship, thoughts just warm from the brain, without any polishing or dress, the very dishabille of the understanding. You have proved yourself more tender of another's embryos, than the fondest mothers are of their own; for you have preserved every thing that I miscarried of. Since I know this, I shall in one respect be more afraid of writing to you than ever at this careless rate, because I see my evil works may again rise in judgment against me; yet in another respect I shall be less afraid, since this has given me such a proof of the extreme indulgence you afford to my slightest thoughts. The revival of these letters has been a kind of examination of conscience to me; so fairly and faithfully have I set down in them, from time to time, the true and undisguised state of my mind: but I find that these which were intended as sketches of my friendship, give as imperfect images of it as the little landscapes we commonly see in black and white do of a beautiful country; they can represent but a very small part of it, and that deprived of the life and lustre of nature. I perceive that the more I endeavoured to render manifest the real affection and value I ever had for you, I did but injure it by representing less and less of it: as glasses which are designed to make an ob-

ject very clear, generally contract it. Yet, as when people have a full idea of a thing first upon their own knowledge, the least traces of it serve to refresh the remembrance, and are not displeasing on that score; so, I hope, the foreknowledge you had of my esteem for you, is the reason that you do not dislike my letters.

They will not be of any great service, I find, in the design I mentioned to you: I believe I had better steal from a richer man, and plunder your letters (which I have kept as carefully as I would Letters Patents, since they entitle me to what I more value than titles of honour.) You have some cause to apprehend this usage from me, if what some say be true, that I am a great borrower; however, I have hitherto had the luck that none of my creditors have challenged me for it: and those who say it are such, whose writings no man ever borrowed from, so have the least reason to complain; and whose works are granted on all hands to be but too much their own. Another has been pleased to declare, that my verses are corrected by other men: I verily believe theirs were never corrected by any man: but indeed if mine have not, 'twas not my fault; I have endeavoured my utmost that they should. But these things are only whispered, and I will not encroach upon Bay's province and *pen whispers*, so hasten to conclude

Your, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

From my Lord LANSDOWNE.

Oct. 21, 1713.

I AM pleased beyond measure with your design of translating Homer. The trials which you have

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already made and published on some parts of that Author, have shewn that you are equal to so great a task : and you may therefore depend upon the utmost services I can do you in promoting this work, or any thing that may be for your service.

I hope Mr Stafford, for whom you was pleased to concern yourself, has had the good effects of the Queen's grace to him. I had notice the night before I began my journey, that her Majesty had not only directed his pardon, but ordered a writ for reversing his outlawry.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

To General ANTHONY HAMILTON *,

Upon his having translated into French verse the Essay on Criticism.

Oft. 10, 1713.

IF I could as well express, or (if you will allow me to say it) translate the sentiments of my heart as you have done those of my head, in your excellent version of my Essay, I should not only appear the best writer in the world, but, what I much more desire to be thought, the most your servant of any man living. 'Tis an advantage very rarely known, to receive at once a great honour and a great improvement. This, Sir, you have afforded me, having at the same time made others take my sense, and taught me to understand my own; if I may call that my own which is indeed more properly yours. Your verses are no more a translation of mine, than Virgil's

* Author of the *Memoirs of the Count de Grammont*, *Contes*, and other pieces of note in French.

are of Homer's; but are, like his, the justest imitation, and the noblest commentary.

In putting me into a French dress, you have not only adorned my outside, but mended my shape; and, if I am now a good figure, I must consider you have naturalized me into a country which is famous for making every man a fine gentleman. It is by your means that (contrary to most young travellers) I am come back much better than I went out.

I cannot but wish we had a bill of commerce for Translation established the next parliament; we could not fail of being gainers by that, nor of making ourselves amends for any thing we have lost by the war. Nay, though we should insist upon the demolishing of Boileau's works, the French, as long as they have writers of your form, might have as good an equivalent.

Upon the whole, I am really as proud as our ministers ought to be of the terms I have gained from abroad; and I design, like them, to publish speedily to the world the benefits accruing from them; for I cannot resist the temptation of printing your admirable translation here*; to which, if you will be so obliging to give me leave to prefix your name, it will be the only addition you can make to the honour already done me. I am

Your, &c.

* This was never done, for the two printed French versions are neither of this hand. The one was done by Monsieur Roboton, private secretary to King George the First, printed in quarto at Amsterdam, and at London 1717. The other by the Abbe Resnel, in octavo, with a large preface and notes, at Paris, 1730.

L E T T E R S

TO AND FROM

Mr STEELE, Mr ADDISON,

Mr CONGREVE, &c.

From the Year 1712, to 1715.

L E T T E R S

TO AND FROM

Mr STEELE, Mr ADDISON,

Mr CONGREVE, &c.

L E T T E R I.

Mr STEELE to Mr POPE.

June 1, 1712.

I AM at a solitude, an house between Hampstead and London, wherein Sir Charles Sedley died. This circumstance set me a-thinking and ruminating upon the employments in which men of wit exercise themselves. It was said of Sir Charles, who breathed his last in this room,

“ SEDLEY has that prevailing gentle art,
 “ Which can with a resistless charm impart
 “ The loosest wishes to the chastest heart :
 “ Raise such a conflict, kindle such a fire
 “ Between declining virtue and desire,
 “ Till the poor vanquish'd maid dissolves away
 “ In dreams all night, in sighs and tears all day.”

This was a happy talent to a man of the town; but, I dare say, without presuming to make uncharitable conjectures on the author's present condition, he would rather have had it said of him that he had prayed,

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U

“ Oh thou my voice inspire,

“ Who touch'd Ifaiah's hallow'd lips with fire!”

I have turned to every verse and chapter, and think you have preserved the sublime heavenly spirit throughout the whole, especially at—*Hark a glad voice—and—The Lamb with wolves shall graze.*—

There is but one line which I think below the original:

“ He wipes the tears for ever from our eyes.”

You have expressed it with a good and pious, but not so exalted and poetical a spirit as the prophet, *The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.*

If you agree with me in this, alter it by way of paraphrase or otherwise, that when it comes into a volume it may be amended. Your poem is already better than the Pollio. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER II.

THE ANSWER.

June 18, 1712.

YOU have obliged me with a very kind letter, by which I find you shift the scene of your life from the town to the country, and enjoy that mixed state which wise men both delight in, and are qualified for. Methinks the moralists and philosophers have generally run too much into extremes, in commending entirely either solitude or public life. In the former, men for the most part grow useless by too much rest, and in the latter are destroyed by too much precipitation; as waters lying still, putrify, and are good for nothing, and running violently on do but the more mischief in their passage to others, and are swallowed up and lost the sooner themselves.

Those indeed who can be useful to all states, should be like gentle streams, that not only glide through lonely valleys and forests, amidst the flocks and the shepherds, but visit populous towns in their course, and are at once of ornament and service to them. But there are another sort of people who seem designed for solitude, such, I mean, as have more to hide than to show. As for my own part, I am one of those of whom Seneca says, "Tam umbratiles sunt, ut putent in turbido esse quicquid in luce est." Some men, like some pictures, are fitter for a corner than a full light; and, I believe, such as have a natural bent to solitude (to carry on the former similitude) are like waters, which may be forced into fountains, and exalted to a great height, may make a noble figure and a louder noise, but after all they would run more smoothly, quietly, and plentifully, in their own natural course upon the ground*. The consideration of this would make me very well contented with the possession only of that quiet which Cowley calls the companion of obscurity: but whoever has the Muses too for his companions, can never be idle enough to be uneasy. Thus, Sir, you see, I would flatter myself into a good opinion of my own way of living. Plutarch just now told me, that 'tis in human life as in a game at tables, where a man may wish for the highest cast, but, if his chance be otherwise, he is e'en to play it as well as he can, and to make the best of it. I am

Your, &c.

* The foregoing similitudes our Author had put into verse some years before, and inserted into Mr Wycherley's poem on *Mix'd Life*. We find them in the versification very distinct from the rest of that poem. See his posthumous works, octavo, page 3d and 4th.

LETTER III.

TO MR STEELE.

July 15, 1712.

YOU formerly observed to me, that nothing made a more ridiculous figure in a man's life, than the disparity we often find in him sick and well: thus one of an unfortunate constitution is perpetually exhibiting a miserable example of the weakness of his mind and of his body, in their turns. I have had frequent opportunities of late to consider myself in these different views, and, I hope, have received some advantage by it, if what Waller says be true, that

“The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,

“Lets in new light thro' chinks that Time has
“made.”

Then surely sickness, contributing no less than old age to the shaking down this scaffolding of the body, may discover the inward structure more plainly. Sickness is a sort of early old age; it teaches us a diffidence in our earthly state, and inspires us with the thoughts of a future, better than a thousand volumes of philosophers and divines. It gives so warning a concussion to those props of our vanity, our strength and youth, that we think of fortifying ourselves within, when there is so little dependence upon our outworks. Youth, at the very best, is but a betrayer of human life in a gentler and smoother manner than age: 'tis like a stream that nourishes a plant upon a bank, and causes it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but at the same time is undermining it at the root in secret. My youth has dealt more fairly and openly with me; it has afforded se-

veral prospects of my danger, and given me an advantage not very common to young men, that the attractions of the world have not dazzled me very much; and I begin, where most people end, with a full conviction of the emptiness of all sorts of ambition, and the unsatisfactory nature of all human pleasures. When a smart fit of sickness tells me this scurvy tenement of my body will fall in a little time, I am even as unconcerned as was that honest Hibernian, who being in bed in the great storm some years ago, and told the house would tumble over his head, made answer, What care I for the house; I am only a lodger. I fancy 'tis the best time to die when one is in the best humour; and so excessively weak as I now am, I may say with conscience, that I am not at all uneasy at the thought, that many men, whom I never had any esteem for, are likely to enjoy this world after me. When I reflect what an inconsiderable little atom every single man is, with respect to the whole creation, methinks, 'tis a shame to be concerned at the removal of such a trivial animal as I am. The morning after my exit, the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green, the world will proceed in its old course, people will laugh as heartily, and marry as fast as they were used to do. The memory of man (as it is elegantly expressed in the Book of Wisdom) passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but one day. There are reasons enough, in the fourth chapter of the same book, to make any young man contented with the prospect of death. "For honourable age is not
 "that which standeth in length of time, or is mea-
 "sured by number of years: but wisdom is the grey

" hair to men, and an unspotted life is old age.
 " He was taken away speedily, lest wickedness
 " should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his
 " soul," &c. I am.

Your, &c.

LETTER IV.

TO MR STEELE.

Nov. 7, 1712.

I WAS the other day in company with five or six men of some learning; where chancing to mention the famous verses which the emperor Adrian spoke on his deathbed, they were all agreed that 'twas a piece of gaiety unworthy of that prince in those circumstances. I could not but differ from this opinion: methinks it was by no means a gay, but a very serious soliloquy to his soul at the point of its departure; in which sense I naturally took the verses at my first reading them, when I was very young, and before I knew what interpretation the world generally put upon them.

" Animula vagula, blandula,

" Hospes comesque corporis,

" Quæ nunc abibis in loca?

" Pallidula, rigida, nudula,

" Nec (ut soles) dabis joca."

" Alas, my soul! thou pleasing companion of this
 " body, thou fleeting thing that art now deserting it!
 " whither art thou flying? to what unknown scene?
 " all trembling, fearful, and pensive! what now is
 " become of thy former wit and humour? thou shalt
 " jest and be gay no more."

I confess I cannot apprehend where lyes the trifling in all this: 'tis the most natural and obvious

reflection imaginable to a dying man: and if we consider the Emperor was a heathen, that doubt concerning the future state of his soul will seem so far from being the effect of want of thought, that 'twas scarce reasonable he should think otherwise: not to mention that here is a plain confession included of his belief in its immortality. The diminutive epithets of *vagula*, *blandula*, and the rest, appear not to me as expressions of levity, but rather of endearment and concern; such as we find in Catullus, and the authors of *Hendeca-syllabi* after him, where they are used to express the utmost love and tenderness for their mistresses.—If you think me right in my notions of the last words of Adrian, be pleas'd to insert it in the Spectator; if not, to suppress it.

I am, &c.

ADRIANI morientis ad ANIMAM,

TRANSLATED.

Ah fleeting Spirit! wand'ring fire,

That long hast warm'd my tender breast,
Must thou no more this frame inspire?

No more a pleasing chearful guest?

Whither, ah whither art thou flying!

To what dark, undiscover'd shore?

'Thou seem'st all trembling, shiv'ring, dying,

And wit and humour are no more!

LETTER V.

Mr STEELE to Mr POPE.

Nov. 12, 1712.

I HAVE read over your Temple of Fame twice, and cannot find any thing amiss, of weight enough to call a fault, but see in it a thousand thousand beauties. Mr Addison shall see it to-morrow: after his perusal of it, I will let you know his thoughts. I desire you would let me know whether you are at leisure or not. I have a design which I shall open a month or two hence, with the assistance of the few like yourself. If your thoughts are unengaged, I shall explain myself further. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER VI.

The ANSWER.

Nov. 16, 1712.

YOU oblige me by the indulgence you have shewn to the poem I sent you, but will oblige me much more by the kind severity I hope for from you. No errors are so trivial, but they deserve to be mended: but since you say you see nothing that may be called a fault, can you but think it so, that I have confined the attendance of * Guardian spirits to Heaven's favourites only? I could point you to several, but it is my business to be informed of those faults I do not know; and as for those I do, not to talk of them, but to correct them. You speak of that poem

* This is not now to be found in the Temple of Fame, which was the Poem here spoken of.

a style I neither merit, nor expect; but, I assure you, if you freely mark or dash out, I shall look upon your blots to be its greatest beauties: I mean, if Mr Addison and yourself should like it in the whole; otherwise the trouble of correction is what I would not take, for I was really so diffident of it as to let it lie by me these * two years, just as you now see. I am afraid of nothing so much as to impose any thing on the world which is unworthy of its acceptance.

As to the last period of your letter, I shall be very ready and glad to contribute to any design that tends to the advantage of mankind, which, I am sure, all yours do. I wish I had but as much capacity as leisure, for I am perfectly idle; (a sign I have not much capacity.)

If you will entertain the best opinion of me, be pleas'd to think me your friend. Assure Mr Addison of my most faithful service; of every one's esteem he must be assur'd already. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER VII.

To Mr STEELE.

November 29, 1712.

I AM sorry you published that notion about Adrian's verses as mine: had I imagined you would use my name, I should have express'd my sentiments with more modesty and diffidence. I only sent it to have your opinion, and not to publish my own, which I distrust'd: but I think the supposi-

* Hence it appears this Poem was writ when the Author was twenty-two years old.

tion you draw from the notion of Adrian's being addicted to magic, is a little uncharitable, ("that he might fear no sort of deity, good or bad"); since in the third verse, he plainly testifies his apprehension of a future state, by being solicitous whither his soul was going. As to what you mention of his using gay and ludicrous expressions, I have owned my opinion to be, that the expressions are not such, but that diminutives are often, in the Latin tongue, used as marks of tenderness and concern.

Anima is no more than my soul, *animula* has the force of my dear soul. To say *virgo bella* is not half so endearing as *virguncula bellula*; and had Augustus only called Horace *lepidum hominem*, it had amounted to no more than that he thought him a pleasant fellow: 'twas the *homunculum* that express'd the love and tenderness that great Emperor had for him. And perhaps I should myself be much better pleased if I were told you called me your little friend, than if you complimented me with the title of a great genius, or an eminent hand, as Jacob does all his authors. I am

Your, &c.

L E T T E R V I I I .

From Mr STEELE.

Dec. 4, 1712.

THIS is to desire of you that you would please to make an ode as of a chearful dying spirit, that is to say, the Emperor Adrian's *Animula vogala* put into two or three stanzas for music. If you comply with this, and send me word so, you will very particularly oblige

Your, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

DO not fend you word I will do, but have already done the thing you desire of me. You have it (as Cowley calls it) just warm from the brain. It came to me the first moment I waked this morning: yet, you'll see, it was not so absolutely inspiration, but that I had in my head not only the verses of Adrian, but the fine fragment of Sappho, &c.

The dying Christian to his S O U L.

O D E.

I.

Vital spark of heav'nly flame!
Quit, oh quit this mortal frame:
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

II.

Hark! they whisper; Angels say,
Sister Spirit, come away!
What is this absorbs me quite?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my Soul, can this be Death?

III.

The world recedes; it disappears!
Heav'n opens on my eyes! my ears
With sounds seraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O Grave! where is thy Victory?
O Death! where is thy Sting?

LETTER X.

TO MR ADDISON.

July 20, 1713.

I AM more joy'd at your return, than I should be at that of the sun, so much as I wish for him the melancholy wet season; but 'tis his fate too, like yours, to be displeasing to owls and obscene animals who cannot bear his lustre. What put me in mind of these night-birds was John Dennis, whom, I think you are best revenged upon, as the sun was in the fable upon these bats and beastly-birds above-mentioned, only by *shining on*. I am so far from esteeming it any misfortune, that I congratulate you upon having your share in that, which all the great men and all the good men that ever lived have had their part of, Envy and Calumny. To be uncensured and to be obscure, is the same thing. You may conclude from what I here say, that 'twas never in my thoughts to have offered you my pen in any direct reply to such a critic, but only in some little raillery; not in defence of you, but in contempt of him *. But indeed your opinion, that 'tis entirely to be neglected, would have been my own, had it been my own case; but I felt more warmth here, than I did when first I saw his book against myself, (though indeed in two minutes it made me heartily merry.) He has written against every thing the world has approved these many years. I apprehend but one danger from Dennis's disliking our sense, that it may make us

* This relates to the Paper occasion'd by Dennis's Remarks upon Cato, call'd Dr Norris's *Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis*.

think so very well of it, as to become proud and conceited upon his disapprobation.

I must not here omit to do justice to Mr Gay, whose zeal in your concern is worthy a friend and honourer of you. He writ to me in the most pressing terms about it, though with that just contempt of the critic that he deserves. I think in these days one honest man is obliged to acquaint another who are his friends; when so many mischievous insects are daily at work to make people of merit suspicious of each other, that they may have the satisfaction of seeing them looked upon no better than themselves. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER XI.

MR ADDISON to Mr POPE.

October 26, 1713.

I WAS extremely glad to receive a letter from you, but more so upon reading the contents of it. The work * you mention will, I dare say, very sufficiently recommend itself when your name appears with the propofals; and if you think I can any way contribute to the forwarding of them, you cannot lay a greater obligation upon me, than by employing me in such an office. As I have an ambition of having it known that you are my friend, I shall be very proud of shewing it by this, or any other instance. I question not but your Translation will enrich our tongue, and do honour to our country; for I conclude of it already from those performances with which you have obliged the public. I would only have you

* The Translation of the Iliad.

consider how it may most turn to your advantage. Excuse my impertinence in this particular, which proceeds from my zeal for your ease and happiness. The work would cost you a great deal of time, and unless you undertake it, will, I am afraid, never be executed by any other; at least I know none of this age that is equal to it beside yourself.

I am at present wholly immersed in country business, and begin to take delight in it. I wish I might hope to see you here some time, and will not despair of it, when you engage in a work that will require solitude and retirement. I am

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XII.

Mr ADDISON to Mr POPE.

Nov. 2, 1713.

I HAVE received your letter, and am glad to find that you have laid so good a scheme for your great undertaking. I question not but the prose* will require as much care as the poetry; but the variety will give yourself some relief, and more pleasure to your readers.

You gave me leave once to take the liberty of a friend, in advising you not to content yourself with one half of the nation for your admirers, when you might command them all. If I might take the freedom to repeat it, I would on this occasion. I think you are very happy that you are out of the fray, and I hope all your undertakings will turn to the better account for it.

* The Notes to his Translation of Homer.

You see how I presume on your friendship in taking all this freedom with you: but I already fancy, that we have lived many years together in an unre-served conversation, and that we may do so many more, is the sincere wish of

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XIII.

To Mr ADDISON.

YOUR last is the more obliging, as it hints at some little niceties in my conduct, which your candour and affection prompts you to recommend to me, and which (so trivial as things of this nature seem) are yet of no slight consequence to people whom every body talks of, and every body as he pleases. 'Tis a sort of tax that attends an estate in Parnassus, which is often rated much higher than in proportion to the small possession an author holds. For indeed an author, who is once come upon the town, is enjoyed without being thanked for the pleasure, and sometimes ill-treated by those very persons who first debauched him. Yet, to tell you the bottom of my heart, I am no way displeased that I have offended the violent of all parties already; and at the same time I assure you conscientiously, I feel not the least malevolence or resentment against any of those who misrepresent me, or are dissatisfied with me. This frame of mind is so easy, that I am perfectly content with my condition.

As I hope, and would flatter myself, that you know me and my thoughts so entirely as never to be

mistaken in either, so 'tis a pleasure to me that you guessed so right in regard to the author of that Guardian you mentioned : but I am sorry to find it has taken air that I have some hand in those papers, because I writ so very few as neither to deserve the credit of such a report with some people, nor the disrepute of it with others. An honest Jacobite spoke to me the sense or nonsense of the weak part of his party very fairly, that the good people took it ill of me that I writ with Steele, though upon never so indifferent subjects. This, I know, you will laugh at as well as I do; yet I doubt not but many little calumniators, and persons of sour dispositions, will take occasion hence to bespatter me. I confess I scorn narrow souls of all parties, and if I renounce my reason in religious matters, I'll hardly do it in any other.

I can't imagine whence it comes to pass, that the few Guardians I have written are so generally known for mine : that in particular which you mention, I never discovered to any man but the publisher, till very lately ; yet almost every body told me of it.

As to his taking a more politic turn, I cannot any way enter into that secret, nor have I been let into it any more than into the rest of his politics ; though 'tis said he will take into these papers also several subjects of the politer kind, as before : but, I assure you, as to myself, I have quite done with them for the future. The little I have done, and the great respect I bear Mr Steele as a man of wit, has rendered me a suspected Whig to some of the violent ; but (as old Dryden said before me) 'tis not the violent I design to please.

I generally employ the mornings in painting with Mr Jervas *, and the evenings in the conversation of such as I think can most improve my mind, of whatever denomination they are. I ever must set the highest value upon men of truly great, that is, honest principles, with equal capacities. The best way I know of overcoming calumny and misconception, is by a vigorous perseverance in every thing we know to be right, and a total neglect of all that can ensue from it. 'Tis partly from this maxim that I depend upon your friendship, because I believe it will do justice to my intention in every thing; and give me leave to tell you, that (as the world goes) this is no small assurance I repose in you. I am

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XIV.

To Mr ADDISON.

Dec. 14, 1713.

I HAVE been lying in wait for my own imagination this week and more, and watching what thoughts came up in the whirl of the fancy, that were worth communicating to you in a letter: but I am at length convinced that my rambling head can produce nothing of that sort; so I must e'en be contented with telling you the old story, that I love you heartily. I have often found by experience, that Nature and Truth, though never so low or vulgar, are yet pleasing when openly and artlessly represented. It would be diverting to me to read the very

* See the Epistle to him in verse, writ about this time.

letters of an infant, could it write its innocent inconsistencies and tautologies just as it thought them. This makes me hope a letter from me will not be unwelcome to you, when I am conscious I write with more unreservedness than ever man wrote, or perhaps talked to another. I trust your good nature with the whole range of my follies, and really love you so well, that I would rather you should pardon me than esteem me; since one is an act of goodness and benevolence, the other a kind of constrained deference.

You can't wonder my thoughts are scarce consistent, when I tell you how they are distracted. Every hour of my life my mind is strangely divided; this minute, perhaps, I am above the stars, with a thousand systems round about me, looking forward into a vast abyss, and losing my whole comprehension in the boundless space of creation, in dialogues with Whiston and the Astronomers; the next moment I am below all trifles, groveling with T*** in the very centre of nonsense: now I am recreated with the brisk sallies and quick turns of wit which Mr Steele, in his liveliest and freest humours, darts about him; and now levelling my application to the insignificant observations and quirks of grammar of C*** and D***.

Good God! what an incongruous animal is man! how unsettled in his best part, his soul; and how changing and variable in his frame of body! the constancy of the one shook by every notion, the temperament of the other affected by every blast of wind! What is he altogether but one mighty inconsistency? Sickness and pain is the lot of one half of him; doubt and fear the portion of the other! What

a bustle we make about passing our time, when all our space is but a point! What aims and ambitions are crowded into this little instant of our life, which (as Shakespear finely words it) is rounded with a sleep! Our whole extent of being is no more, in the eye of Him who gave it, than a scarce perceptible moment of duration. Those animals whose circle of living is limited to three or four hours, as the naturalists tell us, are yet as long-lived, and possess as wide a scene of action as man, if we consider him with a view to all Space, and all Eternity. Who knows what plots, what achievements a mite may perform, in his kingdom of a grain of dust, within his life of some minutes? and of how much less consideration than even this is the life of man in the sight of God, who is from ever, and for ever?

Who that thinks in this train, but must see the world, and its contemptible grandeurs, lessen before him at every thought? 'Tis enough to make one remain stupified in a poize of inaction, void of all desires, of all designs, of all friendships.

But we must return (through our very condition of being) to our narrow selves, and those things that affect ourselves: our passions, our interests flow in upon us, and unphilosophize us into mere mortals. For my part, I never return so much into myself, as when I think of you, whose friendship is one of the best comforts I have for the insignificancy of myself.

I am

Your, &c.

L E T T E R X V.

T O M R A D D I S O N.

Jan. 30, 1713,-14.

YOUR letter found me very busy in my grand undertaking, to which I must wholly give up myself for some time, unless when I snatch an hour to please myself with a distant conversation with you and a few others by writing. 'Tis no comfortable prospect to be reflecting, that so long a siege as that of Troy lyes upon my hands, and the campaign above half over, before I have made any progress. Indeed the Greek fortification, upon a nearer approach, does not appear so formidable as it did, and I am almost apt to flatter myself that Homer secretly seems inclined to a correspondence with me, in letting me into a good part of his intentions. There are indeed a sort of underling auxiliars to the difficulty of a work, called Commentators and Critics, who would frighten many people by their number and bulk, and perplex our progress, under pretence of fortifying their author. These by very low in the trenches and ditches they themselves have digged, encompassed with dirt of their own heaping up; but I think there may be found a method of coming at the main works by a more speedy and gallant way than by mining under ground, that is, by using the poetical engines, wings, and flying over their heads.

While I am engaged in the fight, I find you are concerned how I shall be paid, and are solicitous that I may not have the ill fate of many discarded Generals, to be first envied and maligned, then, perhaps, praised, and, lastly, neglected. The former (the con-

stant attendant upon all great and laudable enterprises) I have already experienced. Some have said I am not a master in the Greek, who either are so themselves, or are not: if they are not, they can't tell; and if they are, they can't without having catechiz'd me: but if they can read (for I know some critics can, and others cannot) there are fairly lying before them some specimens of my Translation from this Author in the Miscellanies, which they are heartily welcome to. I have met with as much malignity another way, some calling me a Tory, because the heads of that party have been distinguishingly favourable to me; some a Whig, because I have been favoured with yours, Mr Congreve's, and Mr Craggs's friendship, and of late with my Lord Hallifax's patronage. How much more natural a conclusion might be formed, by any good-natured man, that a person who has been well used by all sides, has been offensive to none. This miserable age is so sunk between animosities of party and those of religion, that I begin to fear most men have politics enough to make (through violence) the best scheme of government a bad one, and belief enough to hinder their own salvation. I hope, for my own part, never to have more of either than is consistent with common justice and charity, and always as much as becomes a Christian and honest man: though I find it an unfortunate thing to be bred a Papist here, where one is obnoxious to four parts in five, as being so too much or too little; I shall yet be easy under both their mistakes, and be what I more than seem to be, for I suffer for it. God is my witness that I no more envy you Protestants your places and possessions, than I do our priests their charity or learning. I am ambitious of nothing but the good opinion of good men on both sides; for I know that

one virtue of a free spirit, is worth more than all the virtues put together of all the narrow-soul'd people in the world. I am

Your, &c.

LETTER XVI.

TO MR ADDISON.

Oct. 10, 1714.

I HAVE been acquainted by * one of my friends, who omits no opportunities of gratifying me, that you have lately been pleased to speak of me in a manner which nothing but the real respect I have for you can deserve. May I hope that some late malevolencies have lost their effect? Indeed it is neither for me nor my enemies to pretend to tell you whether I am your friend or not; but if you would judge by probabilities, I beg to know which of your poetical acquaintance had so little interest in pretending to be so? Methinks no man should question the real friendship of one who desires no real service. I am only to get as much from the Whigs as I got from the Tories, that is to say, civility; being neither so proud as to be insensible of any good office, nor so humble as not to dare heartily to despise any man who does me an injustice.

I will not value myself upon having ever guarded all the degrees of respect for you: for (to say the truth) all the world speaks well of you, and I should be under a necessity of doing the same, whether I cared for you or not.

As to what you have said of me, I shall never believe that the author of *Cato* can speak one thing and think

* See a Letter from Mr Jervas, and the Answer to it, No 22, 23.

another. As a proof that I account you sincere, I beg a favour of you: it is, that you would look over the two first books of my Translation of Homer, which are in the hands of my Lord Hallifax. I am sensible how much the reputation of any poetical work will depend upon the character you give it: 'tis therefore some evidence of the trust I repose in your good-will, when I give you this opportunity of speaking ill of me with justice; and yet expect you will tell me your truest thoughts, at the same time that you tell others your most favourable ones.

I have a farther request, which I must press with earnestness. My bookseller is reprinting the Essay on Criticism, to which you have done too much honour in your Spectator of N^o 253. The period in that paper, where you say, "I have admitted some strokes of ill nature into that Essay," is the only one I could wish omitted of all you have written; but I would not desire it should be so, unless I had the merit of removing your objection. I beg you but to point out those strokes to me, and you may be assured they shall be treated without mercy.

Since we are upon proofs of sincerity, (which I am pretty confident will turn to the advantage of us both in each other's opinion), give me leave to name another passage in the same Spectator, which I wish you would alter. It is where you mention an observation upon Homer's verses of Sisyphus's stone, as "never having been made before by any of the critics *:" I happened to find the same in Dionysius of Halicarnassus's treatise, *Περὶ συνθesis ὁνομάτων*, who treats very largely upon these verses. I know

* These words are since left out in Mr Tickel's edition, but were extant in all during Mr Addison's life.

you will think fit to soften your expression when you see the passage; which you must needs have read, though it be since slipped out of your memory. I am, with the utmost esteem,

Your, &c.

LETTER XVII.

To the Honourable ———.

June 8, 1714.

THE question you ask in relation to Mr Addison and Philips, I shall answer in a few words. Mr Philips did express himself with much indignation against me one evening at Button's coffeehouse, (as I was told), saying, That I was entered into a cabal with Dean Swift, and others, to write against the Whig-interest, and, in particular, to undermine his own reputation, and that of his friends Steele and Addison: but Mr Philips never opened his lips to my face, on this or any like occasion, though I was almost every night in the same room with him, nor ever offered me any indecorum. Mr Addison came to me a night or two after Philips had talked in this idle manner, and assured me of his disbelief of what had been said, of the friendship we should always maintain, and desired I would say nothing further of it. My Lord Hallifax did me the honour to stir in this matter, by speaking to several people to obviate a false aspersion, which might have done me no small prejudice with one party. However, Philips did all he could secretly to continue the report with the Hanover Club, and kept in his hands the subscriptions paid for me to him, as Secretary to that club. The heads of it have since given him to un-

derstand that they take it ill; but (upon the terms I ought to be with such a man) I would not ask him for this money, but commissioned one of the players, his equals, to receive it. This is the whole matter: but as to the secret grounds of this malignity, they will make a very pleasant history when we meet. Mr Congreve and some others have been much diverted with it, and most of the gentlemen of the Hanover Club have made it the subject of their ridicule on their secretary. It is to this management of Philips that the world owes Mr Gay's Pastorals. The ingenious author is extremely your servant, and would have complied with your kind invitation, but that he is just now appointed Secretary to my Lord Clarendon, in his embassy to Hanover.

I am sensible of the zeal and friendship with which, I am sure, you will always defend your friend in his absence, from all those little tales and calumnies which a man of any genius or merit is born to. I shall never complain while I am happy in such noble defenders, and in such contemptible opponents. May their envy and ill-nature ever increase, to the glory and pleasure of those they would injure; may they represent me what they will, as long as you think me, what I am,

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XVIII.

July 13, 1714.

YOU mention the account I gave you some time ago of the things which Philips said in his foolishness: but I can't tell from any thing in your letter, whether you received a long one from me about a fortnight since. It was principally intended to

thank you for the last obliging favour you did me; and perhaps for that reason you pass it in silence. I there launched into some account of my temporal affairs, and intend now to give you some hints of my spiritual. The conclusion of your letter draws this upon you, where you tell me you prayed for me. Your proceeding, Sir, is contrary to that of most other friends, who never talk of praying for a man after they have done him a service, but only when they will do him none. Nothing can be more kind than the hint you give me of the vanity of human sciences, which, I assure you, I am daily more convinced of; and indeed I have, for some years past, looked upon all of them no better than amusements. To make them the ultimate end of our pursuit, is a miserable and short ambition, which will drop from us at every little disappointment here, and even, in case of no disappointments here, will infallibly desert us hereafter. The utmost fame they are capable of bestowing, is never worth the pains they cost us, and the time they lose us. If you attain the top of your desires that way, all those who envy you will do you harm; and of those who admire you, few will do you good. The unsuccessful writers are your declared enemies, and probably the successful your secret ones: for those hate not more to be excelled, than these to be rivalled: and at the upshot, after a life of perpetual application, you reflect that you have been doing nothing for yourself, and that the same or less industry might have gained you a friendship that can never deceive or end; a satisfaction which praise cannot bestow, nor vanity feel; and a glory which, though in one respect like fame, not to be had till after death, yet shall be felt and enjoyed

to eternity. These, dear Sir, are unfeignedly my sentiments, whenever I think at all: for half the things that employ our heads deserve not the name of thoughts; they are only stronger dreams of impressions upon the imagination: our schemes of government, our systems of philosophy, our golden worlds of poetry, are all but so many shadowy images and airy prospects, which arise to us but so much the livelier and more frequent, as we are more overcast with the darkness, and disturbed with the fumes of human vanity.

The same thing that makes old men willing to leave this world, makes me willing to leave poetry, long habit and weariness of the same track. Homer will work a cure upon me; fifteen thousand verses are equivalent to fourscore years, to make one old in rhyme: and I should be sorry and ashamed to go on jingling to the last step, like a waggoner's horse, in the same road, and so leave my bells to the next silly animal that will be proud of them. That man makes a mean figure in the eyes of Reason, who is measuring syllables, and coupling rhymes, when he should be mending his own soul, and securing his own immortality. If I had not this opinion, I should be unworthy even of those small and limited parts which God has given me, and unworthy of the friendship of such a man as you. I am

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XIX.

July 25, 1714.

I HAVE no better excuse to offer you, that I have omitted a task naturally so pleasing to me as conversing upon paper with you, but that my time and

eyes have been wholly employed upon Homer, whom, I almost fear, I shall find but one way of imitating, which is, in his blindness. I am perpetually afflicted with head-achs, that very much affect my sight; and indeed since my coming hither I have scarce past an hour agreeably, except that in which I read your letter. I would seriously have you think, you have no man who more truly knows to place a right value on your friendship, than he who least deserves it on all other accounts than his due sense of it: but, let me tell you, you can hardly guess what a task you undertake, when you profess yourself my friend; there are some Tories who will take you for a Whig, some Whigs who will take you for a Tory, some Protestants who will esteem you a rank Papist, and some Papists who will account you a heretic.

I find, by dear experience, we live in an age where it is criminal to be moderate, and where no one man can be allowed to be just to all men. The notions of right and wrong are so far strained, that perhaps to be in the right so very violently, may be of worse consequence than to be easily and quietly in the wrong. I really wish all men so well, that I am satisfied but few can wish me so; but if those few are such as tell me they do, I am content; for they are the best people I know. While you believe me what I profess as to religion, I can bear any thing the bigotted may say; while Mr Congreve likes my poetry, I can endure Dennis, and a thousand more like him; while the most honest and moral of each party think me no ill man, I can easily bear that the most violent and mad of all parties rise up to throw dirt at me.

I must expect an hundred attacks upon the publi-

cation of my Homer. Whoever, in our times, would be a professor of learning above his fellows, ought at the very first to enter the world with the constancy and resolution of a primitive Christian, and be prepared to suffer all sort of public persecution. It is certainly to be lamented, that if any man does but endeavour to distinguish himself, or gratify others, by his studies, he is immediately treated as a common enemy, instead of being looked upon as a common friend; and assaulted as generally as if his whole design were to prejudice the State, or ruin the Public. I will venture to say, no man ever rose to any degree of perfection in writing, but through obstinacy, and an inveterate resolution against the stream of mankind: so that if the world has received any benefit from the labours of the learned, it was in its own despite. For when first they essay their parts, all people in general are prejudiced against new beginners; and when they have got a little above contempt, then some particular persons, who were before unfortunate in their own attempts, are sworn foes to them, only because they succeed.— Upon the whole, one may say of the best writers, that they pay a severe fine for their fame, which it is always in the power of the most worthless part of mankind to levy upon them when they please.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XX.

To Mr J E R V A S.

July 28, 1714.

I AM just entered upon the old way of life again, sleep and musing. It is my employment to revive the old of past ages to the present, as it is yours to transmit the young of the present to the future. I am copying the great master in one art, with the same love and diligence with which the painters hereafter will copy you in another.

Thus I should begin my epistle to you, if it were a dedicatory one; but as it is a friendly letter, you are to find nothing mentioned in your own praise, but what one only in the world is witness to, your particular good-natured offices to me.

I am cut off from any thing but common acknowledgments, or common discourse: the first you would take ill, though I told but half what I ought: so in short the last only remains.

And as for the last, what can you expect from a man who has not talked these five days? who is withdrawing his thoughts as far as he can, from all the present world, its customs, and its manners, to be fully possess'd and absorpt in the past? When people talk of going to church, I think of sacrifices and libations; when I see the parson, I address him as Chryses priest of Apollo; and instead of the Lord's prayer, I begin,

“ God of the silver bow, &c”.

While you in the world are concerned about the Protestant succession, I consider only how Menelaus may recover Helen, and the Trojan war be put to

a speedy conclusion. I never enquire if the Queen be well or not, but heartily wish to be at Hector's funeral. The only things I regard in this life, are whether my friends are well? whether my Translation go well on? whether Dennis be writing criticisms? whether any body will answer him, since I don't? and whether Lintot be not yet broke?

I am, &c.

LETTER. XXI.

To the SAME.

Aug. 16, 1714.

I THANK you for your good offices, which are numberless. Homer advances so fast, that he begins to look about for the ornaments he is to appear in, like a modish modern author,

“ Picture in the front,

“ With bays and wicked rhyme upon't.”

I have the greatest proof in nature at present of the amusing power of poetry, for it takes me up so entirely, that I scarce see what passes under my nose, and hear nothing that is said about me. To follow poetry as one ought, one must forget father and mother, and cleave to it alone. My reverie has been so deep, that I have scarce had an interval to think myself uneasy in the want of your company. I now and then just miss you as I step into bed; this minute indeed I want extremely to see you, the next I shall dream of nothing but the taking of Troy, or the recovery of Briseis.

I fancy no friendship is so likely to prove lasting as ours, because, I am pretty sure, there never was a friendship of so easy a nature. We neither of us

demand any mighty things from each other; what vanity we have expects its gratification from other people. It is not I that am to tell you what an artist you are, nor is it you that are to tell me what a poet I am; but 'tis from the world abroad we hope (piously hope) to hear these things. At home we follow our business, when we have any; and think and talk most of each other when we have none. 'Tis not unlike the happy friendship of a stay'd man and his wife, who are seldom so fond as to hinder the business of the house from going on all day, or so indolent as not to find consolation in each other every evening. Thus well-meaning couples hold in amity to the last, by not expecting too much from human nature; while romantic friendships, like violent loves, begin with disquiets, proceed to jealousies, and conclude in animosities. I have lived to see the fierce advancement, the sudden turn, and the abrupt period, of three or four of these enormous friendships, and am perfectly convinced of the truth of a maxim we once agreed in, that nothing hinders the constant agreement of people who live together, but merely vanity; a secret insisting upon what they think their dignity of merit, and an inward expectation of such an over-measure of deference and regard, as answers to their own extravagant false scale; and which no body can pay, because none but themselves can tell exactly to what pitch it amounts.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXII.

Mr JERVAS to Mr POPE.

Aug. 20, 1714.

I HAVE a particular to tell you at this time, which pleases me so much, that you must expect a more than ordinary alacrity in every turn. You know I could keep you in suspense for twenty lines, but I will tell you directly, that Mr Addison and I have had a conversation, that it would have been worth your while to have been placed behind the wainscot, or behind some half-length picture, to have heard. He assured me, that he would make use not only of his interest, but of his art to do you some service: he did not mean his art of Poetry, but his art at Court; and he is sensible that nothing can have a better air for himself than moving in your favour, especially since insinuations were spread, that he did not care you should prosper too much as a poet. He protests that it shall not be his fault, if there is not the best intelligence in the world, and the most hearty friendship, &c. He owns, he was afraid Dr Swift might have carried you too far among the enemy, during the heat of the animosity: but now all is safe, and you are escap'd, even in his opinion. I promised in your name, like a good godfather, not that you should renounce the devil and all his works, but that you would be delighted to find him your friend merely for his own sake; therefore prepare yourself for some civilities.

I have done Homer's head, shadow'd and heighten'd carefully; and I inclose the outline of the same size, that you may determine whether you would have

it so large, or reduced to make room for feuillage or laurel round the oval, or about the square of the busto. Perhaps there is something more solemn in the image itself, if I can get it well perform'd.

If I have been instrumental in bringing you and Mr Addison together with all sincerity, I value myself upon it as an acceptable piece of service to such a one as I know you to be.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XXIII.

Mr POPE'S Answer.

Aug. 27, 1714.

I AM just arrived from Oxford, very well diverted and entertained there. Every one is much concerned for the Queen's death. No panegyrics ready yet for the King.

I admire your Whig-principles of resistance exceedingly, in the spirit of the Barcelonians: I join in your wish for them. Mr Addison's verses on Liberty, in his Letter from Italy, would be a good form of prayer in my opinion,

"O Liberty! thou Goddess heavenly bright!" &c.

What you mention of the friendly office you endeavour'd to do betwixt Mr Addison and me, deserves acknowledgment on my part. You thoroughly know my regard to his character, and my propensity to testify it by all ways in my power. You as thoroughly know the scandalous meanness of that proceeding which was used by Philips, to make a man I so highly value suspect my dispositions toward him. But as, after all, Mr Addison must be the judge in what regards himself, and has seem'd to be a very just one to me; so, I must own to you, I ex-

pect nothing but civility from him, how much soever I wish for his friendship. As for any offices of real kindness or service which it is in his power to do me, I should be ashamed to receive them from any man who had no better opinion of my morals than to think me a Party-man, nor of my temper, than to believe me capable of maligning or envying another's reputation as a poet: so I leave it to time to convince him as to both, to shew him the shallow depths of those half-witted creatures who misinformed him, and to prove that I am incapable of endeavouring to lessen a person whom I would be proud to imitate, and therefore ashamed to flatter. In a word, Mr Addison is sure of my respect at all times, and of my real friendship, whenever he shall think fit to know me for what I am.

For all that passed betwixt Dr Swift and me, you know the whole (without reserve) of our correspondence. The engagements I had to him were such as the actual services he had done me, in relation to the subscription for Homer, obliged me to. I must have leave to be grateful to him, and to any one who serves me, let him be never so obnoxious to any party: nor did the Tory-party ever put me to the hardship of asking this leave, which is the greatest obligation I owe to it; and I expect no greater from the Whig-party than the same liberty.—A curse on the word Party, which I have been forc'd to use so often in this period! I wish the present reign may put an end to the distinction, that there may be no other for the future than that of Honest and Knave, Fool and Man of sense: these two sorts must always be enemies; but for the rest, may all people do as you and I, believe what they please, and be friends.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

To the Earl of HALLIFAX.

MY LORD,

Dec. 1, 1714.

I AM obliged to you both for the favours you have done me, and for those you intend me. I distrust neither your will nor your memory, when it is to do good; and if ever I become troublesome or solicitous, it must not be out of expectation, but out of gratitude. Your Lordship may either cause me to live agreeably in the town, or contentedly in the country, which is really all the difference I set between an easy fortune and a small one. It is indeed a high strain of generosity in you, to think of making me easy all my life, only because I have been so happy as to divert you some few hours: but if I may have leave to add, it is because you think me no enemy to my native country, there will appear a better reason; for I must of consequence be very much (as I sincerely am)

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXV*.

Dr PARNELLE to Mr POPE.

I AM writing you a long letter, but all the tediousness I feel in it is, that it makes me, during the time, think more intently of my being far from you. I fancy, if I were with you, I could remove some of the uneasiness which you may have felt from the op-

* This, and the three Extracts following, concerning the Translation of the first Iliad, set on foot by Mr Addison, Mr Pope has omitted in his first Edition.

position of the world, and which you should be ashamed to feel, since it is but the testimony which one part of it gives you, that your merit is unquestionable. What would you have otherwise, from ignorance, envy, or those tempers which vie with you in your own way? I know this in mankind, that when our ambition is unable to attain its end, it is not only wearied, but exasperated too at the vanity of its labours; then we speak ill of happier studies, and, sighing, condemn the excellence which we find above our reach.—

My Zoilus †, which you used to write about, I finished last spring, and left in town. I waited till I came up to send it you, but not arriving here before your book was out, imagined it a lost piece of labour. If you will still have it, you need only write me word.

I have here seen the first book of Homer ‡, which came out at a time when it could not but appear as a kind of setting up against you. My opinion is, that you may, if you please, give them thanks who writ it: neither the numbers nor the spirit have an equal mastery with yours; but what surprizes me more is that, a scholar being concerned, there should happen to be some mistakes in the author's sense; such as putting the light of Pallas's eyes into the eyes of Achilles, making the taunt of Achilles to Agamemnon (that he should have spoils when Troy should be taken) to be a cool and serious proposal; the translating what you call *ablution* by the word

† Printed for B. Lintot, 1715, 8vo, and afterwards added to the last edition of his poems.

‡ Written by Mr Addison, and published in the name of Mr Tickell.

offals, and so leaving water out of the rite of lustration, &c. But you must have taken notice of all this before. I write not to inform you, but to shew I always have you at heart.

I am, &c.

Extract from A

L E T T E R

Of the Rev. Dr BERKLEY, Dean of Londonderry.

July 7, 1715.

———Some days ago, three or four gentlemen and myself, exerting that right which all readers pretend to over authors, sat in judgment upon the two new Translations of the first Iliad. Without partiality to my countrymen, I assure you, they all gave the preference where it was due; being unanimously of opinion, that yours was equally just to the sense with Mr ——'s, and without comparison more easy, more poetical, and more sublime. But I will say no more on such a thread-bare subject as your late performance is at this time.

I am, &c.

Extract from A

L E T T E R

Of Mr GAY to Mr POPE.

July 8, 1715.

———I have just set down Sir Samuel Garth at the opera. He bid me tell you, that every body is pleased with your Translation, but a few at Button's; and that Sir Richard Steele told him, that Mr Addison

said the other translation was the best that ever was in any language *. He treated me with extreme civility, and out of kindness gave me a squeeze by the fore finger.—I am informed that at Button's your character is made very free with as to morals, &c. and Mr Addison says, that your Translation and Tickell's are both very well done, but that the latter has more of Homer.

I am, &c.

Extract from A

L E T T E R

Of Dr ARBUTHNOT to Mr POPE.

July 9, 1715.

——I congratulate you upon Mr T**'s first book. It does not indeed want its merit; but I was strangely disappointed in my expectation of a translation nicely true to the original; whereas in those parts where the greatest exactness seems to be demanded, he has been the least careful; I mean the history of ancient ceremonies and rites, &c. in which you have with great judgment been exact.

I am, &c.

* Sir Richard Steele afterwards, in his Preface to an Edition of the Drummer, a Comedy by Mr Addison, shews it to be his opinion, that "Mr Addison himself was the person who translated this book."

L E T T E R XXVI.

Mr P O P E to the Hon. J A M E S C R A G G S, Esq.

July 15, 1715.

I L A Y hold of the opportunity given me by my Lord Duke of Shrewsbury, to assure you of the continuance of that esteem and affection I have so long borne you, and to the memory of so many agreeable conversations as we have pass'd together; I wish it were a compliment to say, such conversations as are not to be found on this side of the water: for the spirit of dissention is gone forth among us; nor is it a wonder that Button's is no longer Button's, when Old England is no longer Old England, that region of hospitality, society, and good-humour. Party affects us all, even the wits, though they gain as little by politics as they do by their wit. We talk much of fine sense, refin'd sense, and exalted sense; but for use and happiness, give me a little common sense. I say this in regard to some gentlemen, profess'd wits, of our acquaintance, who fancy they can make poetry of consequence at this time of day, in the midst of this raging fit of politics. For they tell me, the busy part of the nation are not more divided about Whig and Tory, than these idle fellows of the feather about Mr T***'s and my Translation. I (like the Tories) have the town in general, that is, the mob, on my side; but it is usual with the smaller party to make up in industry what they want in number, and that is the case with the little senate of Cato. However, if our principles be well considered, I must appear a brave Whig, and Mr T. a rank Tory; I translated Homer

for the public in general, he to gratify the inordinate desires of one man only. We have, it seems, a Great Turk in poetry, who can never bear a brother on the throne; and has his mutes too, a set of nodders, winkers, and whisperers, whose business is to strangle all other offsprings of wit in their birth. The new translator of Homer is the humblest slave he has, that is to say, his first minister; let him receive the honours he gives me, but receive them with fear and trembling; let him be proud of the approbation of his absolute Lord, I appeal to the people, as my rightful judges and masters; and if they are not inclined to condemn me, I fear no arbitrary high-flying proceeding from the small court-faction at Button's. But after all I have said of this great man, there is no rupture between us. We are each of us so civil and obliging, that neither thinks he is obliged; and I, for my part, treat with him, as we do with the Grand Monarch; who has too many great qualities not to be respected, though we know he watches any occasion to oppress us.

When I talk of Homer, I must not forget the early present you made me of Monsieur de la Motte's book: and I can't conclude this letter without telling you a melancholy piece of news, which affects our very entrails; L*** is dead, and soupes are no more! You see I write in the old familiar way. "This is not to the minister, but to the friend*." However, it is some mark of uncommon regard to the minister, that I steal an expression from a secretary of state.

I am, &c.

* Alluding to St John's letter to Prior, published in the *Report of the Secret Committee*.

LETTER XXVII.

To Mr CONGREVE.

Jan. 16, 1714, -15.

METHINKS when I write to you, I am making a confession; I have got (I can't tell how) such a custom of throwing myself out upon paper without reserve. You were not mistaken in what you judged of my temper of mind when I writ last. My faults will not be hid from you, and perhaps it is no dispraise to me that they will not: the cleanness and purity of one's mind is never better proved, than in discovering its own fault at first view: as when a stream shews the dirt at its bottom, it shews also the transparency of the water.

My spleen was not occasioned, however, by any thing an abusive angry critic could write of me. I take very kindly your heroic manner of congratulation upon this scandal; for I think nothing more honourable, than to be involved in the same fate with all the great, and the good that ever lived; that is, to be envied and censured by bad writers.

You do no more than answer my expectation of you, in declaring how well you take my freedom, in sometimes neglecting, as I do, to reply to your letters so soon as I ought. Those who have a right taste of the substantial part of friendship, can waive the ceremonial: a friend is the only one that will bear the omission; and one may find who is not so, by the very trial of it.

As to any anxiety I have concerning the fate of my Homer, the care is over with me: the world must be the judge, and I shall be the first to consent

to the justice of its judgment, whatever it be. I am not so arrant an author as even to desire that if I am in the wrong, all mankind should be so.

I am mightily pleased with a saying of Monsieur Tourreil: "When a man writes, he ought to animate himself with the thoughts of pleasing all the world: but he is to renounce that desire or hope the very moment the book goes out of his hands."

I write this from Binfield, whither I came yesterday, having passed a few days in my way with my Lord Bolingbroke. I go to London in three days time, and will not fail to pay a visit to Mr. M——, whom I saw not long since at my Lord Halifax's. I hoped from thence he had some hopes of advantage from the present administration: for few people (I think) but I, pay respects to great men without any prospects. I am in the fairest way in the world of being not worth a groat, being born both a Papist and a poet. This puts me in mind of re-acknowledging your continued endeavours to enrich me: but, I can tell you, 'tis to no purpose, for without the *Opes*, *aquum mi animum ipse parabo*.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

To Mr CONGREVE.

March 19, 1714.-15.

THE farce of the What-d'ye-call-it* has occasioned many different speculations in the town. Some looked upon it as a mere jest upon the tragic poets, others as a satire upon the late war. Mr Cromwell hearing none of the words, and seeing the action to be tragical, was much astonished to find the audience

* Written by Mr Gay.

laugh ; and says the prince and princess must doubtless be under no less amazement on the same account. Several Templars, and others of the more vociferous kind of critics, went with a resolution to hiss, and confess'd they were forced to laugh so much, that they forgot the design they came with. The Court in general has in a very particular manner come into the jest, and the three first nights (notwithstanding two of them were court-nights) were distinguished by very full audiences of the first quality. The common people of the pit and gallery received it at first with great gravity and sedateness, some few with tears ; but after the third day they also took the hint, and have ever since been very loud in their claps. There are still some sober men who cannot be of the general opinion ; but the laughers are so much the majority, that one or two critics seem determined to undeceive the town at their proper cost, by writing grave dissertations against it ; to encourage them in which laudable design, it is resolved a preface shall be prefixed to the farce, in vindication of the nature and dignity of this new way of writing.

Yesterday Mr Steele's affair was decided. I am sorry I can be of no other opinion than yours, as to his whole carriage and writings of late : but certainly he has not only been punished by others, but suffered much even from his own party in the point of character, nor (I believe) received any amends in that of interest, as yet, whatever may be his prospects for the future.

This gentleman, among a thousand others, is a great instance of the fate of all who are carried away by party-spirit, of any side, I wish all violence may

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succeed as ill; but am really amazed that so much of that sour and pernicious quality should be joined with so much natural good humour as, I think, Mr Steele is possessed of.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXIX.

To Mr CONGREVE.

April 7, 1715.

MR POPE is going to Mr Jervas's, where Mr Addison is sitting for his picture; in the mean time, amidst clouds of tobacco at a coffeehouse, I write this letter. There is a grand revolution at Will's: Morrice has quitted for a coffeehouse in the city, and Titcomb is restored, to the great joy of Cromwell, who was at a great loss for a person to converse with upon the fathers and church-history: the knowledge I gain from him is entirely in painting and poetry; and Mr Pope owes all his skill in Astronomy to him and Mr Whiston, so celebrated of late for his discovery of the longitude in an extraordinary copy of verses*. Mr Rowe's Jane Grey is to be play'd in Easter-week, when Mrs Oldfield is to personate a character directly opposite to female nature; for what woman ever despised sovereignty? You know Chaucer has a tale where a knight saves his head by discovering it was the thing which all women most coveted. Mr Pope's Homer is retarded by the great rains that have fallen of late, which causes the sheets to be long a-drying: this gives Mr Lintot great uneasiness, who is now endeavouring to corrupt the curate of his parish to pray for fair weather, that his

* Called, *An Ode on the Longitude*, in Swift and Pope's Miscellanies.

work may go on. There is a fix-penny criticism lately published upon the tragedy of the *What-d'ye-call-it*, wherein he with much judgment and learning calls me a blockhead, and Mr Pope a knave. His grand charge is against the *Pilgrim's Progress* being read, which, he says, is directly levelled at Cato's reading Plato. To back this censure, he goes on to tell you, that the *Pilgrim's Progress* being mentioned to be the eighth edition, makes the reflection evident, the tragedy of Cato having just eight times (as he quaintly expresses it) visited the press. He has also endeavoured to show, that every particular passage of the play alludes to some fine part of tragedy, which he says, I have injudiciously and profanely abused*. Sir Samuel Garth's poem upon my Lord Clare's house, I believe, will be published in the Easter-week.

Thus far Mr Gay, who has in his letter forestalled all the subjects of diversion; unless it should be one to you to say, that I sit up till two o'clock over Burgundy and Champagne; and am become so much a rake, that I shall be ashamed in a short time to be thought to do any sort of business. I fear I must get the gout by drinking, purely for a fashionable pretence to sit still long enough to translate four books of Homer. I hope you'll by that time be up again, and I may succeed to the bed and couch of my predecessor: pray cause the stuffing to be repaired, and the crutches shortened for me. The calamity of your gout is what all your friends, that is to say, all that know you, must share in; we desire you, in your turn, to condole with us, who are under a persecu-

* This curious piece was intitled, *A complete Key to the What-d'ye-call-it*, written by one Griffin a Player, assisted by Lewis Theobald.

tion, and much afflicted with a distemper which proves mortal to many poets, a Criticism. We have indeed some relieving intervals of laughter (as you know there are in some diseases); and it is the opinion of divers good gueffers, that the last fit will not be more violent than advantageous; for poets assail'd by critics, are like men bitten by tarantulas, they dance on so much the faster.

Mr Thomas Burnet hath played the precursor to the coming of Homer, in a treatise call'd *Homerides*. He has since risen very much in his criticism, and, after assaulting Homer, made a daring attack upon the What-d'ye-call-it *. Yet there is not a proclamation issued for the burning of Homer and the Pope by the common hangman; nor is the What-d'ye-call-it yet silenced by the Lord Chamberlain.

Your, &c.

L E T T E R XXX.

Mr CONGREVE to Mr POPE.

May 6.

I HAVE the pleasure of your very kind letter. I have always been obliged to you for your friendship and concern for me, and am more affected with it than I will take upon me to express in this letter. I do assure you there is no return wanting on my part, and am very sorry I had not the good luck to see the Dean before I left the town; it is a great pleasure to me, and not a little vanity, to think that he misses me. As to my health, which you are so kind to enquire after, it is not worse than in London; I am almost afraid yet to say that it is better, for I

* In one of his papers called *The Grumbler*.

cannot reasonably expect much effect from these waters in so short a time; but in the main they seem to agree with me. Here is not one creature that I know, which, next to the few I would chuse, contributes very much to my satisfaction. At the same time that I regret the want of your conversation, I please myself with thinking that you are where you first ought to be, and engaged where you cannot do too much. Pray give my humble service, and best wishes to your good mother. I am sorry you don't tell me how Mr Gay does in his health; I should have been glad to have heard he was better. My young Amanuensis, as you call him, I am afraid, will prove but a wooden one: and you know *ex quo-vis ligno*, &c. You will pardon Mrs R—'s pedantry, and believe me to be

Your, &c.

P. S. By the inclosed you will see I am like to be impressed, and enrolled in the list of Mr Curll's authors; but, I thank God! I shall have your company. I believe it high time you should think of administering another emetic.

END OF VOLUME SIXTH.

